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# NOTES

ON

## DIFFICULT PASSAGES

OF THE

## NEW TESTAMENT

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MISSIONARY OF THE A. B. C. F. M.



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## PREFACE.

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THE aim of this little work is sufficiently indicated by its title. No doubt difficulties will often occur to one reader of the Scriptures which would not occur, or not appear serious, to another. My aim has been to select those passages and those only which present special difficulty to ordinary readers. In this way I have endeavored to elucidate over a hundred and twenty passages. A considerable number of the difficulties here discussed arise from apparent discrepancies between the narratives of the four evangelists. I have a firm persuasion that the inspiration afforded to the writers of these precious memoirs of our Saviour was such as to prevent any real discrepancy, and that, if all the circumstances were known to us, the difficulties would entirely disappear. A few words in regard to the characteristics of the different Gospels will not be out of place here.

Matthew seems to have been the first to write down memoirs of Christ, and his grand object was to present him as the Messiah promised in the Old Testament Scriptures. He wrote in Palestine and with a natural reference to the feelings and needs of the Christians of that country, nearly all of whom were Israelites, who would look for the promised Saviour as the "son of David, the son of Abraham." Hence he commences with the genealogy, which gives the legal evidence that Jesus was of the lineage of David (see the first note); carefully records that our Lord, although com-

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monly called Jesus of Nazareth, was born in Bethlehem, the city of David, according to the prediction of Micah; and throughout his Gospel shows more frequently than the other evangelists, how, in the life, miracles, and teaching of Christ, the Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled. Hence, too, he does not give those explanations of names, words, places, and persons, so frequent in the other Gospels, especially in Luke and John.

Irenæus, in the second century, and others of the early fathers, state that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew and for Hebrew Christians. If this be correct, it would seem that he must himself have written it out also in Greek (the language then most widely prevailing all over the Roman Empire), for the Greek gospel has in all respects the air of an original, presenting no indication of being a translation by another hand.

Mark's Gospel is briefer, omitting any record of the birth and childhood of Jesus, the Sermon on the Mount, and all the longer discourses of our Lord. At the same time he gives some things with greater particularity than any of the other evangelists, and seems to have been specially careful to preserve the chronological order in his narrative. He evidently wrote somewhat later than Matthew, and for readers in general, Jews and Gentiles, hence giving some explanations which would not have been necessary had he been writing for Jewish readers only.

Papias and other early Christian writers speak of Mark as a companion and *interpreter* of Peter, apparently meaning that he wrote down in his Gospel what Peter gave in his discourses on the life of Christ, and Eusebius (Eccl. Hist.

ii. 15) states on the authority of Clement of Alexandria that, after Mark had written his Gospel, Peter examined and approved it and sanctioned the reading of it in churches.

Luke wrote his Gospel apparently somewhat later than Mark, probably at Cæsarea, where he was in company with the apostle Paul during his detention there as a prisoner, A.D. 58-60. Irenæus and other early Christian writers say that Luke wrote his Gospel under the guidance of the apostle Paul. We know that he was a beloved companion and fellow-laborer of Paul (2 Tim. 4: 11), probably of Gentile origin, for in Col. 4: 14, after having mentioned Mark and others as his fellow-workers who were "of the circumcision," Paul goes on to name Epaphras (who was from Colosse) and "Luke, the beloved physician." The natural inference is that these two were not "of the circumcision."

The dedication of Luke's Gospel, and of the Acts of the Apostles, to a friend (named Theophilus) is in accordance with Greek and Roman usage, but not with that of Hebrew writers. It is not known who this Theophilus was, but from the fact that when Luke mentions places in Palestine he specifies the region in which they were situated, as "Caper-naum, a city of Galilee," "Arimathæa, a city of the Jews," "Emmaus, a village sixty furlongs from Jerusalem," etc., and that when, in relating Paul's voyage to Rome, he mentions Syracuse, Rhegium, Puteoli, Appii Forum, and the Three Taverns, he does so without any explanatory remark, it may reasonably be inferred that Theophilus was a resident in Italy, and so all these places were familiar to him.

It thus appears (and this corresponds with early tradition) that Luke wrote specially for the instruction of Gentile



Christians. In accordance with this design he gave his Gospel more the character of a *history* than the other evangelists did, repeatedly giving dates, as in ch. 1: 5, "In the days of King Herod;" in ch. 2: 2, "This enrolment took place when Cyrenius was governor of Syria;" in ch. 3: 1, "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar," mentioning also the names of the rulers of Judæa and the neighboring provinces, quite in accordance with the prevailing usage of Greek and Roman historians.

The apostle John wrote his Gospel many years, probably not less than twenty-five years, after all the others were published, and doubtless at Ephesus, where the earliest church historians state that the last years of his life were spent. Irenæus says that John published his Gospel at Ephesus. Clement of Alexandria and Jerome state that he wrote it in compliance with a request from Christians of Asia that he would write more fully than the other evangelists had done respecting the divinity of Christ and his spiritual utterances, and internal evidence confirms these statements.

That this Gospel was written away from Palestine and many years after the events narrated is apparent when we notice:—

1. That when John speaks of the people he calls them "the Jews," where the earlier evangelists call them "the people," or "the multitudes."

2. That he explains Jewish customs or mentions them as if not well known to all his readers. Thus in ch. ii, in the account of the marriage in Cana, he says: "There were set six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews."

3. That, in speaking of places at which particular events occurred, he frequently uses a past tense; for example, in ch. 11: 18, "Bethany *was* near Jerusalem," and in ch. 18: 1, "Jesus went to a place beyond the brook Cedron, where there *was* a garden."

That John's Gospel was designed to supplement the others is manifest from his omitting so many important things recorded in them. He has no account of the angelic visits to Zacharias, Mary, and Joseph; no account of the birth and childhood of our Saviour, nor of his temptation; mentions very few of his miracles; gives none of his narrative parables, and no record of the institution of the Lord's Supper or of our Lord's ascension. On the other hand, he gives much that the others have not, and throughout writes as if his readers were familiar with the other Gospels. He does not tell us that Jesus resided at Nazareth, yet mentions (ch. 1: 45) that Philip spoke of him as "Jesus, the son of Joseph of Nazareth," and (ch. 18: 5, 7; 19: 19) that he was commonly called "Jesus of Nazareth." He does not relate the imprisonment of John the Baptist by Herod, yet says incidentally (ch. 3: 24), "John was not yet cast into prison." He speaks of Bethany (ch. 11: 1) as "the town of Mary and her sister Martha," yet had not previously informed his readers who Mary and Martha were.

But the special distinction of John's Gospel is its clear presentation of Christ as *the Word of God made flesh for our redemption*, a doctrine which some denied even during the life-time of the apostle (2 John 7-10). This great doctrine John clearly declares in his Gospel, in his Epistles, and in the Revelation.

So far as John narrates the facts of the gospel history, he gives them in the same order with Mark, thus confirming that order, while Matthew and Luke frequently group together similar facts, disregarding the order of time.

These remarks will, I trust, aid the careful reader to appreciate the attempts made in the following notes to reconcile apparent discrepancies between the different Gospels.

That these notes may prove helpful to many candid, but sometimes perplexed, students of the New Testament is my hope and my prayer to the Author of the divine Word.

ELIAS RIGGS.

CONSTANTINOPLE, September 12, 1888.



# NOTES ON DIFFICULT PASSAGES

## OF THE

### NEW TESTAMENT.

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MATTHEW I: 1-17.

#### The Genealogy of Jesus Christ.

THERE is considerable ancient evidence going to prove that Matthew wrote his Gospel originally in Hebrew.<sup>1</sup> If so, the Hebrew copy is lost. But there is also internal evidence that the Greek copy is *not a translation*, and so we may conclude that it was in accordance with a divine plan that Matthew should prepare a Hebrew copy for the special edification of Hebrew Christians of his own time, and also a Greek copy for permanent use among all nations. However this may be, it is evident that this Gospel was written with a

<sup>1</sup> This is affirmed by Papias, Irenæus, Origen, and others, who wrote in the second, third, and fourth centuries after Christ. By *Hebrew* they doubtless meant (as did Luke in Acts 22: 2) that Aramaic dialect which was the vernacular language of the Jews in the days of the apostles.

special view to the wants of Jewish readers. Hence in commencing his record of the doings and teachings of *the Messiah*, he naturally begins with showing that He sprung from the race of Abraham and of David, as had been promised of old. See Gen. 12: 2, 3 (comp. John 8: 56); 2 Sam. 7: 13; Ps. 2: 6-9; 110: 1-4; Is. 11: 1. From these and many other passages of the Old Testament it was understood among the Jews that the Messiah (*the Anointed One*), the great Deliverer was to spring from the family of David, and from Micah 5: 2 that He was to be born in Bethlehem, the city of David's birth. Compare Matt. 2: 5, 6.

Several difficulties arise with reference to this genealogy. First, the fact that the genealogy here given is that of Joseph, the husband of our Saviour's mother, but, as we know, not his father. In regard to this point we remark:—

1. *There is no appearance of concealment here.* The writer plainly declares that he gives the ancestry of *Joseph, the husband of Mary* (v. 16), respecting whom he as plainly declares, in vs. 18 and 20, that he was not the father of Jesus.

2. As the genealogy is traced through the line of the kings of Judah until the captivity, it seems

altogether probable that the writer's design was to show not merely that Jesus was descended from the family of David, but that He was the *heir of David's royal house*, as all those kings in succession had been.

3. Inheritance in Israel was in the *male line*. When a man died leaving daughters only, they were to inherit his property on condition that they married husbands of the same tribe, so that the land might not pass into the possession of another tribe. In case a man died without children his brother or nearest male relative (Ruth 3: 12, 13) was to marry his widow, and the first son by her was to bear the name and inherit the property of the deceased (Deut. 25: 6). Of course no provision could be made in the law of Moses for a case like that of our Saviour; but as Joseph, under divine direction, did not divorce his wife, Jesus was virtually adopted as his son (see Luke 3: 23), and thus became his legal heir and the heir of the royal line of David.

Another difficulty is presented by the fact that Matthew and Luke give different genealogies, yet both apparently genealogies of Joseph, the reputed, but not real, father of Jesus. Of this fact three explanations have been proposed:—

1. That Luke gives the real genealogy of Mary, and that, Mary being the only child of her parents, Joseph, her husband, became the adopted son and legal heir of her father Eli. This explanation seems to have been accepted by the majority of commentators, ancient and modern.

2. That suggested by Julius Africanus of the third century, namely, that Eli, having died childless, Jacob (having by previous intermarriages between the two branches of David's descendants, become the *nearest kinsman*) married his widow, and Joseph, his first son, while truly begotten by him, as stated in Matthew, was legally the son of Eli, as stated in Luke.

3. That Matthew gives the real genealogy of Mary, inserting the name of her husband, in accordance with the usage of the Jewish genealogical registers, and Luke the real pedigree of Joseph.

It is perhaps impossible for us to decide with confidence between these modes of explanation. But whichever we may prefer, there can scarcely be a doubt that both were copied from public official registers, and so both would be unimpeachable, and either one of them would be satisfactory legal proof to Jewish readers that the family in

which Jesus was born belonged to the lineage of David. We do not read that our Saviour's claim to be the *Son of David* was ever disputed by his enemies.

Another difficulty presented by the genealogy is the manifest omission of several generations. Naasson was contemporary with Moses (Num. 1: 7), and must have died in the wilderness nearly four hundred years before the birth of David; and yet, unless there are omissions in the register as found in Ruth 4: 20-22 and Matt. 1: 4-6, only four generations intervene, so that each father must have been on an average nearly eighty years of age at the time of his son's birth. This seems altogether too much to allow for each generation. A similar remark might be made in reference to the generations from Phares, son of Judah, to Naasson (or Nahshon), where, as the record stands, more than fifty years must be allowed for each generation. But whatever may be the fact in these cases, it is evident that, in verse 8, three generations are omitted between Joram and Uzziah (namely, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah), and in verse 11, one (Jehoiakim) between Josiah and Jechoniah. Some have thought that the omission of the names of Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah

was on account of their being descended through Athaliah from the accursed house of Ahab, and that the omission extended no farther they explain by saying that in the divine mercy the curse was not permitted to reach beyond the "third and fourth generation." But this theory does not help to account for the omission of Jehoiakim in verse 11, and may therefore be set aside as inadmissible.

The following seems to me the most probable mode of accounting for these abbreviations of the list. The writer had in mind the division of the whole period from Abraham to Christ into three parts, namely, The times *before, during, and after* the reigns of the kings of David's line. Finding *fourteen* (the double of the sacred number seven) generations from Abraham to David, including both, he reduced the remaining generations to two groups of fourteen each, not only by the above-mentioned omissions, but also by counting Jechoniah (Jehoiachin) not with the second group (as one of the kings), but with the third. This hypothesis accounts for the extraordinary expression, "Jechoniah and his brethren," which must include the three sons and one grandson of Josiah who reigned for brief periods

during the troublous times which ended with the Babylonish captivity. The reckoning Jeconiah with the third group (by which alone it can be made to include fourteen names) might be justified on the ground that he reigned only three months, and then was carried as a captive to Babylon, where he spent the greater part of his life. Thus the whole line from Abraham to Christ is presented in three groups with fourteen names in each group. It should be remarked that the omission of one or more names from such a list, when the line of descent is preserved, does not invalidate the proof of that descent which such a genealogy is designed to give; also, that similar abbreviations of genealogical lists are found in ancient Jewish writings.

MATTHEW I : 22, 23.

“All this was done, that it might be fulfilled,” etc. By this we are not to understand that the *only* design of God in bringing these events to pass was the fulfillment of the predictions, but simply that this was one object, and that the events recorded took place in such a way as to constitute *a fulfillment* of the predictions. Sometimes this phrase is used where it can not mean

more than that the event recorded was a *partial* fulfillment, or even was such *as fitly to be described* by the words of the prophet. For example, what David in Ps. 41: 9 says of Ahithophel, "He that ate of my bread lifted up his heel against me," is applied by our Lord himself to the treachery of Judas, and is introduced by the same formula here used, namely, "That it might be fulfilled," which must of course be understood to mean, *so that there was a fulfillment*. What Isaiah said of the Israelites of his time is applied in John 12: 38 and elsewhere to the unbelieving Jews of the time of Christ. In many such cases we must understand the fulfillment to consist in such a correspondence as renders the words quoted applicable to the recorded facts, although originally intended to apply immediately to others.

The prediction here quoted, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child," etc., is taken from Is. 7: 14. Ahaz, the ungodly king of Judah, was greatly terrified by the combination of Israel and Syria against him with the purpose of dethroning him and putting another in his stead (Is. 7: 2, 6). But notwithstanding the many offences of Ahaz



and his house, God did not intend to reject the royal family of David, but to preserve it in accordance with his gracious promise given to David (2 Sam. 7: 15, 16), and to raise up from it the Messiah, the King who should reign forever. When therefore Ahaz in unbelief refused to choose a sign, as God had invited him to do, the prophet Isaiah said, "The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Some commentators have supposed that such a sign, namely, a miraculous birth of a child from a virgin, took place in the prophet's days, and that the application of the prediction to the birth of Christ was a secondary application. But it seems incredible that such an event should have occurred in Isaiah's days, and yet no mention be made of the fulfillment of such a wonderful prediction. Others think that a miracle was not predicted, but that the prophet simply foretold that a young woman, *then* a virgin, should be married and bear a child, and that, before that child could learn to say My father and my mother, the deliverance of the land from the threatened invasion should take place. But how could this be a *sign* to Ahaz? Especially, how could it be

such a wonderful sign as to justify the strong language used by the prophet, "Behold, the Lord himself shall give you a sign"?

It is better, therefore, to understand the words of the prophet as meaning, You slight the offer of God to give you a sign; but God will nevertheless carry out his gracious purpose toward the house of David. He will preserve it from destruction, and in due time will make manifest by a most wonderful sign, an unprecedented miracle, his love for his people and his faithfulness to his promises. A virgin shall bear a son, whose name shall be Immanuel, "God with us." Not that he should bear no other name, but that this name should be truly applicable to him and descriptive of him. This seems to be the view taken by the inspired evangelist of the prediction and of its fulfillment in the miraculous birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who was God made man and dwelling among men.

[Luke's omission of the visit of the Magi, the slaughter of the infants in Bethlehem, and the flight into Egypt, and his *apparent* statement that Joseph and his family returned to Nazareth immediately after the presentation in the temple, may best be noticed under Luke 2 : 39.]

## MATTHEW 4: 1-11.

**The Temptation of Jesus.**

This passage records one of the most mysterious events which have occurred in the whole history of the human race. That our divine Redeemer should be tempted, or be capable of being tempted, to sin is a profound mystery. That Satan should have dared to assault the Holy One of God, and that he should ever have imagined the possibility of success in leading him to commit sin, seems exceedingly strange. Yet we are plainly told in Heb. 4: 15 that Jesus was tempted in all respects as we are, only that he did not in any instance yield and commit sin. Our first parents listened to the suggestions of the tempter and fell, bringing ruin upon their race. It behooved Him through whom the race was to be restored, *the second Adam*, "to be made like unto his brethren in all things" (Heb. 2: 17), and therefore to be tempted as they are tempted, "that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest," who, as having passed through the same trials, could sympathize with them from his own experience, and who, by setting them an example, could show them how to overcome the tempter.

As this trial was part of our Saviour's prepara-

tion for his work, it was fitting that it should take place just before he commenced his public ministry. We shall best understand it, and derive most profit from it, by taking the narrative in its plainest sense as a truthful statement of actual occurrences, and not a *parable*, as some have been inclined to interpret it. This remark, however, is not intended to decide the question whether the tempter appeared to our Saviour *in a bodily form*, or simply addressed his suggestions to his mind. In either way the temptation and the resistance would be equally real and the victory over it equally decisive.

Verse 1. *Led up by the Spirit.* It was predicted, Is. 11 : 2, that the Spirit of the Lord should rest upon the Messiah. Here we have the fulfillment of this promise. In Luke 4 : 1 we read that when Jesus left the Jordan where he was baptized he was *full of the Holy Spirit*; and here we are informed that he went to his encounter with Satan, not rashly, but led by the Spirit. The Spirit of God led him there because this trial was part of his necessary preparation for his great work.

Verse 2. *When he had fasted forty days and forty nights.* Moses, the lawgiver of Israel, when

he went up upon Mount Sinai to receive the commands of God for Israel, remained there *fasting* forty days (Ex. 34: 28). So Elijah, the greatest reformer who arose between the time of Moses and that of our Saviour, in the midst of his efforts to call back the people to the worship of the true God, made, doubtless by divine direction,<sup>2</sup> a journey to Mount Sinai, where he was to receive divine communications calculated to aid him in that important work, and on that journey passed forty days without food. And now Jesus, when about to enter upon his public ministry, spends forty days fasting. In each of these cases it was a season of abstraction from the world and from ordinary occupations and unquestionably of intimate communion with God, in preparation for a great, divinely appointed work. In each case life was sustained by divine power without the ordinary means. It is interesting to notice how in this as in many other instances the experience of the Saviour corresponds with that of his redeemed people. Also, to note the fact that Moses and Elijah, whose particular experience corresponded so closely with that of Jesus, were the individuals selected from all the inhabitants of the heavenly

<sup>2</sup> This we may infer from the angelic visit and the miraculous supply of food recorded in 1 Kings 19: 5-8.

world to come to our Lord on the mount of transfiguration and to commune with him in regard to the sufferings which he was about to undergo.

Notice (v. 3) the apparent slightness of the transgression to which Jesus was at first tempted, namely, to use his miraculous power for the supply of his own necessity. So gradual are the approaches of evil. But Jesus saw that it would be unbecoming in him, and therefore wrong, to work a miracle for his own relief. God, who led out his people into the wilderness, could and did sustain them there without the ordinary means and supplies. The same divine power had led Jesus into a wilderness and had sustained him there for forty days ; and now should he distrust the power and wisdom of his Father ? It is remarkable that our Saviour's wonder-working power was often used for the relief of the wants of others, as well as for objects connected with the accomplishment of his great work, but rarely if ever for the supply of his personal wants.

The next temptation (v. 5) shows the cunning craftiness of the enemy. If Jesus shows such unswerving trust in God, let him manifest it by an act which may be witnessed by multitudes and which will bring him credit with the people. And

since Jesus had appealed to the divine word in answer to the former temptation, Satan now quotes from the Scriptures a promise *apparently* applicable to the case in hand, but artfully leaves out the essential condition implied in the words, "to keep thee *in all thy ways*," that is, in the path of duty and obedience to God's will.

But again our Saviour foils the tempter by an answer taken from God's Word. It is from Deut. 6: 16, where Moses bade the Israelites to beware of tempting the Lord their God. He refers to the instance of their tempting God in Massah (a name signifying *temptation*), recorded in Ex. 17: 2-7. From this instance we learn that by tempting God we are to understand putting his power, truth, and mercy to an unnecessary trial, refusing to trust him without more evidence than he sees best to give. Of the same nature is running into needless danger and expecting unwarranted interposition.

The order of the three recorded temptations is not the same in Matthew and Luke. But in Luke there is nothing to fix the order positively, while from the use of the word *then*, at the beginning of verse 5, it would seem that Matthew has given us the three temptations in their historical order. If

so, the last was the boldest and most shameless of all. Satan, failing in his attempts to conceal the evil of sin under an artful disguise, lays aside all reserve and proceeds to a most gross and undisguised proposal. Since the Messiah was to be a *king*, Satan offers him universal dominion, impudently claiming that he had authority to confer it, and makes this offer on the single condition of Jesus' rendering homage to him.

We know but little about the world of spirits, good or bad, for God has revealed but little. But it is evident that, under the supreme government of God, considerable powers and influence are committed to them, not to the good only, but also to the evil. This is implied in Satan's being called "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4: 4), as well as in the language employed in Eph. 6: 12, to describe the nature of the Christian conflict, "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers," etc. The same thing is implied in the permission given to Satan to injure Job (Job 1: 12; 2: 6). Still his claim to have the disposal of the kingdoms and glory of the whole world was false and impious.

In precisely what way the tempter showed Jesus the kingdoms and glory of the world we do not



know. Probably it was similar to the manner in which Ezekiel and other prophets were carried *in the spirit* to distant places and saw prophetic visions. That Satan should be allowed to exercise an influence over the imaginations of those whom he tempts, corresponds with what is said in 2 Thess. 2 : 9, of his working, namely, that it is "with all power and signs and lying wonders," and in 2 Cor. 11 : 14, of his transforming himself into an angel of light. In Rev. 12 : 9 he is spoken of as the deceiver of the whole world ; and although God will not suffer his chosen people to be *fatally* deceived (Matt. 24 : 24), yet he does permit the attempt to be made.

Here again Jesus was ready with an appropriate answer from the word of God : "Get thee hence, Satan : for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." The thought of rendering homage to any creature, however exalted, was abhorrent to his holy soul.

All Satan's wiles having proved ineffectual, he departs from Jesus "for a season" (Luke 4 : 13), and at once good angels come and minister to his necessities. How welcome to him in his exhausted state must have been their visit, and with what joy would they hasten, *when permitted*, to his relief!

So does God often send to his people comfort after special trials ; and his angels, though unseen, are permitted to minister to them (Heb 1 : 14), as they did to Jesus.

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MATTHEW 4 : 12, 13.

**Connexion between the imprisonment of John the Baptist and the going of Jesus from Judæa into Galilee.**

Matthew here passes over a considerable period of time, during which occurred the events recorded in John 1 : 19-3 : 36. At the time of John's imprisonment Jesus had already been preaching for some time. But he did not by any movement of his own take John's work from his hands, but left that to be done (under the direction of his Father's all-ruling providence) by the act of Herod in imprisoning John. The permission of this interval, during which both Jesus and John were exercising their ministry, was useful by affording opportunity for the repeated testimonies borne by John to Jesus (John 1 : 19-36 ; 3 : 25-30), showing plainly that there was no antagonism between the two. "He must increase, but I must decrease." At the time of John's imprisonment Jesus was

laboring in Judæa, while John was of course in Herod's dominions. When therefore John was thrown into prison and thus compelled to cease from his public labors, our Saviour went into Galilee and took up in a more full and public manner the spiritual work which John was compelled to lay down. This seems to be the connexion between the imprisonment of John and our Saviour's going into Galilee. Coincident with this, as a motive for his leaving Judæa, was the increasing jealousy of the Jewish rulers alluded to in John 4: 1-3. He would avoid unnecessary conflict with them, and not throw himself into their hands until his time should fully come. This was probably one reason why the greater part of his ministry was spent in Galilee.

By leaving Nazareth, which was in the mountain region of Galilee, and taking up his abode in Capernaum, which was on the border of the Sea of Galilee and close by the boundary between the tribes of Zebulon and Naphtali (both of which bordered upon that sea), and by causing the glorious light of his gospel to shine in that neglected region, Jesus fulfilled the magnificent prediction in Is. 9: 1, 2.

## MATTHEW 4: 18-22.

**The Call of Simon, Andrew, James, and John  
to follow Jesus.**

This call was not the beginning of their acquaintance with Jesus. That is recorded in John 1: 35, etc. John himself seems to have been one of the two disciples of John the Baptist mentioned in vs. 35 and 40. The incident there recorded must have occurred nearly if not quite a year before the call which we are now considering. In the meantime they had accompanied Jesus on some of his journeys, but had not so become his permanent disciples as to give up their wonted employment as fishermen. Neither was this call their call to be of the number of the twelve apostles. This latter occurred some months later, and is recorded in Matt. 10: 2-4; Mark 3: 13-19; and Luke 6: 13-17. The present call was to follow Jesus with a view to their becoming "fishers of men"; that is, to leave their occupation and become his permanent disciples, and thus be instructed and trained for the work of preaching the gospel.

The circumstances of this call are more fully related by Luke, chap. 5: 1-11. Some commen-

tators, on account of apparent differences in the incidents recorded there, regard that as a still different and later call. But it seems very difficult to account for another and later call of essentially the same character as that recorded in Matthew and Mark. And on careful examination, we do not find any thing in the details recorded by Luke inconsistent with the briefer narratives of Matthew and Mark. It would seem that at first both boats had been drawn up upon the beach, and the fishermen were on shore washing their nets. After using Simon's boat as a platform from which to preach to multitudes on the shore, Jesus directed Simon to push out into the deeper water and let down his nets. The wonderful draught of fishes amazed him and his companions. Then Jesus says to him, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." Some little time may have passed in the conversation with Peter and Andrew, and our Saviour, walking along on the shore and coming near to the other boat, finds James and John with their father Zebedee by that time in the boat engaged in repairing their nets, as stated by Matthew, ch. 4: 21. From this time forth, all four of the young men leave their old employment and become regular pupils in the school of Christ.

MATTHEW, chapters 5-7.

**The Sermon on the Mount.**

This discourse appears to be the same which we find less fully recorded in Luke 6: 20-49. Some have called this in question, partly because Luke's narrative is so much more brief than Matthew's, and partly because Matthew speaks of the discourse as having been delivered on the mountain, while Luke says that Jesus came down from the mountain and stood in a "level place." This *level place* may, however, have been upon the mountain, though not so high as the spot to which our Lord ascended for retirement and prayer. He would naturally seek a *level place* for the convenience of his audience gathering to hear him, and might descend some distance for this purpose, while still he might wish to remain in the partial retirement of the mountain; and Matthew, who does not mention the fact of his going higher up for prayer, might naturally speak of his going up from the plain to the mountain in connexion with this discourse. That the one report of this discourse is fuller than the other need not surprise us, since both are obviously mere outlines of a discourse which doubtless occupied hours in the

delivery, while even Matthew's record of it can be read through in a few minutes. This view accounts sufficiently for some passages being found in the briefer record which are not found in the longer one.

The form of Luke's narrative shows that this discourse was delivered immediately after the appointment of the twelve apostles. Matthew, in ch. 10: 2-4, gives the names of the apostles, but without designating the time of their appointment. This was a most fitting occasion for such a setting forth of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom and the character of his true followers. The discourse was specially addressed to his disciples, but in the hearing of the multitude. This is implied in the expression, "his disciples came unto him," v. 1. They came near and formed the inner circle about him, as being those directly addressed.

Chapter 5, verse 17. *Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets.* The Jews, having confidence in their commonly received interpretations of the Scriptures, and seeing that the teachings of Jesus were in many things opposed to those interpretations, drew the inference that he was opposed to the law.

Doubtless many of them thought that the Messiah would bring in a new law and abrogate the old. But our Saviour declares that there is no contradiction between his teaching and that of the "Law and the Prophets," that is, of the Old Testament.

*To fulfill it.* Christ fulfills the law : —

1. By declaring its true spiritual meaning and showing the defects of the prevailing interpretations of it.

2. By exhibiting in his own life a perfect example of obedience to it.

3. By accomplishing in his work and sufferings all that was predicted and foreshadowed in the old dispensation.

4. By redeeming his people from the curse of the broken law (Rom. 10 : 4), and

5. By bringing them into a vital union with himself, and through the gift of his Spirit enabling them to obey all God's commandments.

Verse 20. The *scribes*, whose occupation was the copying, study, and interpretation of the Scriptures, and specially those who were of the sect of the *Pharisees*, were the most strict of all the Jews in their view of what constituted righteousness. The language of our Saviour was



therefore very startling. The religion of his disciples must be stricter still. But the explanation of this language is not difficult to find. The strictness of the scribes and Pharisees related to outward conduct, while they neglected the state of the heart. Our Lord directed the attention of his disciples to the heart as that from which all outward actions proceed, and as the essential thing in the sight of God. This is plainly seen in the interpretations which he gives of the laws respecting murder, adultery, etc.

Notice that he does not say, Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, *ye shall not be great* in the kingdom of heaven, but *ye shall not enter it*; ye shall have no portion in it.

Verse 22. In the three expressions, *the judgment* (a general term, which might refer to any local court), *the council* (Gr. συνέδριον), Hebraized into *Sanhedrin* (or, inaccurately, *Sanhedrim*), meaning the great national council, and *hellfire*, there is a gradation of increased intensity; but in the offences mentioned, namely, being angry, calling a man *raka* (worthless), and calling him fool, there does not appear any such gradation. We must therefore understand our Saviour as saying, in an emphatic manner, that for any of these offences,

if persisted in and not repented of, a man becomes in the view of God deserving of judgment, of condemnation, and of hell. We say *in the view of God*, because human tribunals can not judge the feelings of the heart when they are not carried out in acts.

Verse 25. *Agree with thine adversary quickly.* This injunction has been explained by many interpreters as allegorical, meaning, settle your controversy with God while there is time; that is, before you are summoned to the final judgment, when it will be too late. Others understand it as an expansion of the command, "Be reconciled to thy brother." Our Saviour certainly enjoins it upon his disciples to avoid lawsuits, even though in order to this they must sacrifice their rights. See v. 40. But it seems to me best of all to understand Him as comprising both these ideas. Passing on from the injunction, Be reconciled to thy brother (thy fellow-man) we may understand Him as here giving the general injunction, Avoid controversy, and settle disputes in a friendly way, thus escaping the sad consequences of litigation; and above all, settle your controversy with God while there is time and opportunity, lest you suffer the awful consequences of being condemned in the great final judgment.

It is no objection to this interpretation that it represents God as both adversary and judge. In the tenth chapter of John, our Saviour, after saying in v. 2, "He that entereth by the door is the shepherd of the sheep," says in v. 9, "I am the door;" and yet only two verses further on, to impress another highly important feature of his relation to his disciples, he says, "I am the good shepherd."

Verse 26. *Until thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.* The question has been raised whether this language does not teach that the sinner may by his sufferings pay the full penalty of his sins, and so be entitled to his release. And the Papists draw from these words a proof for their fond invention of purgatory. But it is scarcely necessary to remark that the word *until* does not carry with it any such implication. When in Isaiah 22: 14, the Lord says to Israel, "Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die," the meaning is, It will never be purged away, but will bring you to destruction. So here the meaning is that the case of a sinner unreconciled to God is hopeless. He *can not* pay his debt, and can not be released until he does pay it.

Verses 29, 30. Must we understand our Lord

as enjoining or justifying in any case the literal plucking out of a right eye, or the cutting off of a right hand? By no means. The language here employed should be regarded simply as a strong, earnest injunction not to cling to any thing, however dear to us, which would lead us into sin. It is analogous to the declaration in Luke 14: 26, "If any man come unto me, and hateth not his own father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

Verse 34. *Swear not at all.* The very forms of the oaths here referred to (being such as a magistrate would never employ in administering a judicial oath) prove that our Saviour did not mean to prohibit a witness giving his testimony under oath in a court of justice, but the use of oaths in common conversation, which, it appears, was fearfully prevalent among the Jews.

That judicial oaths, and oaths on other solemn occasions, were lawful under the old dispensation, is manifest from many passages of the Old Testament, being expressly commanded in Ex. 22: 11, and the neglect to testify under oath forbidden in Lev. 5: 1; also, from the prohibition of false swearing (Lev. 19: 12), and from the injunction to

swear only by the name of the true God (Deut. 6: 13). That the same principle holds now and always is evident from the example of God, confirming his promises and threatenings with an oath (Gen. 22: 16; Ps. 95: 11; 110: 4; Heb. 6: 17, etc.); of Christ, who answered under adjuration before the Jewish council (Matt. 26: 63), and of an inspired writer of the New Testament (Rom. 9: 1; Phil. 1: 8, etc.).

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MATTHEW 6: 9-13.

**The Lord's Prayer.**

*After this manner.* Certainly our Lord does not enjoin it upon us to use in prayer the words following and no others. His own example in several recorded prayers, and his injunction to his disciples *to agree* as to what they will ask of God, forbid such an interpretation. We must understand him as giving *an outline* of what true prayer should comprise. This may also be inferred from the variations which appear in this prayer as given to the disciples on another occasion recorded in Luke 11: 2-4, where instead of "this day," we have "day by day," and instead of "debts," we

have "sins," thus interpreting the term *debts* as used here. Regarding the prayer as an outline, we notice :—

1. That we are instructed to address God as our heavenly Father. We are called to be his children (1 John 3 : 1), and he desires that we should approach him with filial love, reverence, and confidence.

2. That the first petitions which we offer should not relate to our personal wants, but to the glory, kingdom, and will of God. In prayer, as in our lives, we should "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

3. That in what we ask for ourselves in reference to the body we should be content with little. Give us this day (or day by day) our daily bread (literally, the bread needed for our subsistence, as Chrysostom well explains it) ; and

4. That in reference to the Spirit we should seek the free forgiveness of our past transgressions and protection in future from temptation and from all the forms of evil.

The doxology at the close of this prayer, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever," is not found in the most ancient manuscripts of the Greek New Testament. In

later manuscripts it appears in the margin, sometimes written with red ink, and in still later copies incorporated in the text. It seems, therefore, highly probable that it did not belong to the prayer as originally given by our Lord, but was attached to it afterward as an appropriate doxology. As such we need not hesitate to use it. Its sentiment is thoroughly Scriptural, and its very words are found, though not in the same order, in a prayer of King David recorded in 1 Chron. 29: 11, "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, . . . thine is the kingdom, O Lord."

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MATTHEW 8: 2-4.

### Healing of a Leper.

Compare Mark 1: 40-45 and Luke 5: 12-16.

Had we only Matthew's Gospel, we should infer that this miracle was performed *after* the delivery of the Sermon on the Mount. But a careful comparison of the narratives in Mark and Luke shows that it occurred *before* that discourse was delivered.

Matthew appears in general to have grouped the events which he narrates, rather in reference to their displaying the power of Jesus and the evidence of his being the promised Messiah, than to their chronological order. Luke also frequently narrates events without regard to the order of time. Mark, in his briefer Gospel (written, as several of the early fathers testify, under the special instruction of Peter), has much more carefully preserved the order of time, and John, in what we may call his supplementary Gospel, has adhered to the same order. This will appear if we carefully notice the indications of time and the succession of events given in many passages by the writers of the several Gospels.

In regard to the design of the charge in verse 4, "See thou tell no man, but go, show thyself to the priest," etc., some have thought that our Saviour's primary object was to show that he did not neglect or set aside the ceremonial law. But it seems much more natural to understand that his aim was (1) to avoid excitement, which might tend to the rousing of hostility, and thus be a hindrance to his work; and (2) to provide for the legal verification of the cure, which would in the end be "a testimony unto them"; that is, not to



the priest alone, but to all the people, of his wonderful power to heal and to save.

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MATTHEW 10: 10.

"Nor staff."

Luke 9: 3, "Neither staff"; Mark 6: 8, "Save a staff only."

Among the directions given by our Lord to the twelve apostles when he sent them forth on a temporary mission restricted to the land of Israel, we find in Matthew and Luke, "nor staff," or "neither staff," but in Mark, "save a staff only." The best readings of the text in all three have *staff* in the singular, and not *staves*.

On this apparent discrepancy, we remark :—

1. Matthew was one of those sent out on this mission, and (aside from the evidence that he wrote under divine inspiration and guidance) could not possibly have failed of knowing whether they, or any of them, carried staves or not. The same remark applies equally to Peter, whose disciple and helper Mark was, under whose superintendence there is good evidence that Mark prepared his Gospel, and with whose sanction he published it. It would therefore be rash to

assume a contradiction between the two statements.

2. It is self-evident here, as in the case of the Sermon on the Mount, that we have only a brief abstract of our Saviour's instructions, and not the whole of them. And

3. It is a sufficient reconciliation of the two directions, if we suppose that our Lord charged his disciples not to encumber themselves with luggage on this brief tour, and so not to provide money or food or garments, mentioning a staff among the things not necessary to be procured; and yet remarked that, if any one had a staff and was accustomed to use it, he might take it with him. Peter may have been one of those who habitually used a staff, and remembered having used it on this occasion, and may have mentioned it to Mark as illustrating the extreme simplicity with which they went, *just as they were*, on this tour.

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MATTHEW 10: 23.

"Ye shall not have gone over [literally, finished] the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come."

To what *coming* of the Son of man do these

words refer? The expression is a general one, and might be referred to any manifestation of the Messiah. The Jews seem to have been in the habit of speaking of the Messiah as *the coming one*. John's disciples asked Jesus, "Art thou he that should come?" (literally, "Art thou the coming one?") Matt. 11: 3. Interpreters have suggested various times of our Saviour's *coming* as being referred to in these words addressed to the disciples. Some have explained them as referring to the last judgment; others to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus; others to the resurrection of Christ, or to the day of Pentecost.

From Mark 6: 30 and Luke 9: 10, it appears that the Twelve were not long absent from Jesus on this first tour. But we must not infer that during this brief absence they had completed the work in reference to which these instructions were given. They probably made many such excursions; and at length seventy other disciples were commissioned on a similar errand, namely, to go before their Master and prepare the way for his coming; preaching, not that the promised kingdom of the Messiah had fully come, but that it was *at hand*. See verse 7. That kingdom did not fully come until our Lord had finished his

atoning work on earth and been "received up into glory."

The most recent commentators generally interpret the *coming* of the Son of man, in the passage under consideration, as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem. The objection to this is that this first mission of the apostles was manifestly a temporary one, and the instructions given them by our Lord correspond to this temporary character. Among them was the charge not to go among the *Gentiles*, nor to *any city of the Samaritans*, whereas just as soon as our Lord was glorified they were to commence their permanent work as his witnesses, in *Judæa, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth* (Acts 1: 8), only waiting a few days, till they should be baptized with the Holy Spirit, and thus "receive power from on high" for their great undertaking. The destruction of Jerusalem occurred about forty years after this, long after the gospel had been successfully preached among Samaritans and among Gentiles. We conclude therefore that the *coming* to which our Lord here refers was the close of his earthly ministry, which would also be the close of the temporary and the beginning of the permanent commission of the apostles. I see

no need of defining minutely whether it should be reckoned from the resurrection, as Lightfoot prefers, referring to Rom. 1: 4, "declared to be the Son of God . . . by the resurrection," or from the day of Pentecost, as Poole seems to prefer, remarking that what occurred on that day was "an eminent act of God's providence, in which Christ was showed to the world." It is enough to understand him as saying that they would not complete their temporary mission to the cities of Israel (to proclaim that the kingdom of heaven was *at hand*) before he would overtake them, finish his earthly work, and thus fully establish that kingdom so long foretold and expected.

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MATTHEW 12: 31, 32.

### The Unpardonable Sin.

Verse 31. "Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven." Here the nature of the case shows us that we must understand that every *kind* of sin *may* (and in the case of some persons *will*) be forgiven; not that every sin will actually be forgiven, which would flatly contradict the statement immediately following.

Verse 32. "Whosoever shall speak [in Mark 3: 29, and Luke 12: 10, blaspheme] against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in that which is to come." On this passage three questions arise, on which many inquiring minds have felt difficulty.

1. Is it a particular sin to which our Saviour refers, or rather a degree of obduracy in sin?

2. Why is the distinction made between blasphemy against Christ and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?

3. Does the last clause imply that some sins not forgiven in this world may be forgiven in the world to come?

In regard to the first point we know from our Saviour's own words that no sin truly repented of and forsaken is too great to be forgiven. "Him that cometh unto me I will *in no wise* cast out." This is manifest also from the fact that the penitent robber on the cross was forgiven, and also from the charge given by our Lord to his disciples, to *begin at Jerusalem* the preaching of repentance and forgiveness, namely, to those whom the apostle Peter addresses (Acts 2: 36) as guilty of having crucified the Lord Jesus.

Blasphemy against God under the old dispen-

sation was punished with death (Lev. 24: 12-16). And yet many cases are on record of blasphemers being converted and becoming devout Christians. Even Paul the apostle speaks of himself as having been a blasphemer when he was making havoc of the Church (1 Tim. 1: 13).

In Heb. 6: 6 we read of a class of backsliders from Christianity of whom it is said that it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. Whether we understand the impossibility as absolute, or only as indicating extreme difficulty, in either case it is implied that if they could be brought to repentance they would obtain forgiveness. The difficulty was that they could not be renewed again unto *repentance*.

The above considerations would lead us to understand our Saviour in this passage as referring, not to any particular blasphemy or other sin, but to a *degree of obduracy* (indicated by blaspheming against the Holy Spirit) which would cut off all hope of repentance and consequently of forgiveness. This view is confirmed by a consideration of the circumstances under which these words were uttered. The rulers of the Jews saw the evidence of the wonderful works of Christ, and yet were determined to

oppose and crush him. They said among themselves, "What do we? This man doeth *many miracles*. If we let him alone, every body will believe on him." So, subsequently, in reference to a miracle wrought by apostles, they said, "That a notable miracle has been wrought is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem, and *we cannot deny it*," implying that, if they could deny it in a way to persuade the people, they would. In other words, the national cause must be maintained, *right or wrong*. Such men did violence to their own convictions. They saw the evidence that the Spirit of God was working, and yet, before the people, they represented the mighty works of Jesus as performed by the aid of the prince of demons. It was of such men that our Saviour said that their sin would never be forgiven.

We come to the second question. Why the difference between blasphemy against the Son of man and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? I would answer, simply because the former sin might be committed without a full knowledge of the Saviour's divine character and mission. The latter sin would be much more heinous, because those who committed it felt in their consciences



that the works in question were performed "by the finger of God," and yet pretended to believe that they were wrought by the aid of a vile demon, and denounced them as such before the people.

In reply to the third question we remark, first, that there is no *necessity* for regarding it as implied in the words of Jesus that some sins not forgiven here may be forgiven hereafter. The phrase, "neither in this world nor in the world to come," may well be regarded as a periphrasis for *never*. It is said to have been frequently so employed by the Jews. Bloomfield, in his note on this passage, refers to his *Recensio Synoptica* for Rabbinical citations to this effect. The question must be decided by an appeal to the Scriptures, and the uniform testimony of the Scriptures is that men are to be judged in the future state *according to the deeds done in the body*. There is not the least hint in them of any extension of probation to the future state.

The apostle John (1 John 5: 16) speaks of *a sin unto death*, respecting which he goes on to say, "I do not say that he shall pray for it." We may well consider him as alluding to Christ's

words concerning sin which will *never* be forgiven, and concerning which the most benevolent Christian could not pray in faith that it might be forgiven.

While therefore we must admit that there is a degree of obduracy which shuts out all hope of repentance and pardon, and while this should be a warning to all sinners not to presume upon God's mercy, or to continue in sin because grace is so free, yet since that point in any sinner's course when he passes beyond hope is wisely hidden from us, we may, and should, labor to save all, and may pray for all, even as our Lord on the cross prayed for his murderers, and as Stephen prayed for those who were stoning him to death. Especially may we labor and pray in hope for any who are distressed by the fear that they have committed the unpardonable sin; for this very fear is an indication that their consciences are not "seared as with a hot iron," and that the Holy Spirit's influences have not yet been wholly withdrawn from them.

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MATTHEW 16 : 16-20.

"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church."

The principal views advocated by interpreters of these words, ancient and modern, are three, namely :—

1. That the rock upon which our Lord declares that he will build his Church is himself. This was Augustine's later interpretation. In his earlier writings he regarded Peter as the rock. This view would require us to suppose that Jesus, after saying, Thou art Peter, made some gesture directing attention to himself as he added, Upon *this* rock I will build my Church. But of any such gesture there is no hint in the text.

The advocates of this view have urged in its favor the fact that the Greek text exhibits *Petros* for Peter (masculine) and *petra* for rock (feminine). To this it is a sufficient answer that *petra* is the ordinary Greek term for *rock*, but that when employed as the name of a man it must of necessity take the masculine form. Moreover, the Syriac version (which probably gives the very words of our Saviour) has the same term (*kipho*, represented in English by *Cephas*) in both cases. "Thou art *Kipho*, and upon this *kipho* I will build my church."

If our Saviour intended to say, Upon *myself* I will build my church, it seems very difficult to

account for his introducing the statement by saying, Thou art Peter, without plainly adding, But I am *the Rock*. Moreover, it seems unnatural for him in the same sentence to speak of himself as both the builder of the church and its foundation.

2. A second view advocated by some interpreters is that *the rock* was Peter's *confession that Jesus was the Messiah*. But this seems remote and forced, especially after the declaration, "Thou art Peter." The Church is spoken of as a building, a glorious temple, of which Jesus Christ is the *corner stone*, the apostles and prophets *foundation stones*, and all believers *living stones* (Eph. 2 : 20-22 ; 1 Peter 2 : 5, 6 ; Rev. 21 : 14) ; but nowhere is any confession or profession spoken of as a *foundation* of the Church.

3. The simplest and most natural understanding of our Saviour's words appears to me to be that Peter is himself the foundation ; not the sole foundation, but a portion of it, in common with the other apostles. This he was, being specially distinguished among the original apostles as the first to preach the gospel of salvation, to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius.

This view is confirmed by the fact that the

power of *binding and loosing* here conferred upon Peter (in recognition of his promptness in coming forward, as the spokesmen of the Twelve, and distinctly acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah) was afterward conferred equally upon all the apostles, and in a certain sense upon all Christians (Matt. 18: 18; John 20: 23). It is in perfect accord with the representation in Eph. 2: 20 and Rev. 21: 14, of the apostles as being foundation stones in the spiritual temple. It would probably never have been contested except for the preposterous claims which Papists found on this passage of the supremacy of Peter among the apostles, and of the popes as being his successors. These claims require a brief notice here. That they are unfounded and may safely be rejected by all Christians is evident; for, —

1. The office of the apostles was such that it could not be transmitted to successors. It is spoken of in Acts 1: 22 as *bearing witness to the resurrection of Christ*, — that great crowning fact of the gospel record, without which the preaching of the gospel would be vain (1 Cor. 15: 14), — and thus laying the foundations of the Church. This they did with power (Acts 2: 32; 5: 32; 10: 39), as Paul also declares that as a wise

master-builder he had laid the foundation (1 Cor. 3 : 10). Thus the apostles could be figuratively, and yet appropriately, designated as being themselves foundations in the spiritual temple. In this capacity it is evident that they could have no successors.

2. No official superiority over the other Apostles was conferred upon Peter. "It shall not be so among you," said our Saviour (Matt. 20 : 26), and "All ye are brethren" (23 : 8). Accordingly we do not find in the Acts of the Apostles the slightest trace of any authority being exercised by Peter over his brother apostles. He was present at the council in Jerusalem (Acts 15 : 7, etc.), but evidently did not preside (v. 19), and when at Antioch he failed in duty, he was openly rebuked by Paul (Gal. 2 : 11). Neither is there in Peter's Epistles evidence of his claiming any such authority.

3. There is no evidence that Peter founded the Church of Rome, nor is it possible that he can have been its pastor for twenty-five years as the Papists claim ; for, —

(1) The best ancient authorities state that Peter suffered martyrdom during the reign of the Emperor Nero, and so not later than A.D. 68.

Paul's Epistle to the Romans, written only ten years before Peter's death, not merely contains no salutation to Peter, among the numerous greetings addressed in chapter 16 to those who had been Paul's fellow-laborers in the gospel, nor any allusion to Peter's having preached the gospel at Rome, but implies in chapter 1: 11, 15, that no apostle had yet labored there, and so Paul (who would not build on another man's foundation) was desirous of going to Rome to impart to the believers there "some spiritual gift" *to the end they might be established.*

(2) In Paul's letters written *from* Rome A.D. 61-63 to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, although mention is made of other fellow-laborers in the gospel, not a word is said of Peter. This is inexplicable on the supposition that Peter was pastor of the church there. The same inference is naturally drawn from the narrative in Acts 28: 15-31 of Paul's arrival in Rome (A.D. 61) and of his first interviews there with both Christians and Jews.

What are we then to understand in verse 19 by "the keys of the kingdom of heaven," and by authority to *bind* and *loose*?

The Papists and some others maintain that in

this passage Christ conferred upon Peter, and in chapter 18: 18 and John 20: 23 upon all the apostles, authority *to forgive the sins of individuals*, and to grant them an assured title to admission into heaven when they die. But "the kingdom of heaven" denotes, not merely the heavenly state, but also, and usually, the Church, as founded by the Messiah, beginning on earth and perfected in heaven. The grant of the *keys* of this kingdom naturally implies the authority to decide who shall be admitted to it and who rejected. This the apostles did *by authoritatively declaring, under the guidance of God's Spirit, the conditions of admission*, not by pronouncing the sins of individuals forgiven. This latter Jesus often did, but the apostles never. When Jesus pronounced the sins of individuals forgiven, he was understood by the Jews, and rightly, as claiming divine authority. Had any such authority been committed to the apostles, the exercise of it would inevitably have been prominent in their management of the affairs of the Church. Instead of this, there is not a single instance of it on record. The claim of pope or priest to forgive sins must therefore be regarded as a blasphemous assumption of a divine prerogative.



On the contrary, the claim of the apostles to teach infallibly, by divine inspiration, the conditions of admission to the kingdom of heaven or exclusion from it, was founded on the promise of Christ, and confirmed by the miracles which they wrought in his name. Paul claimed this authority when in Rom. 2 : 16 he declared that in the day of judgment God would judge the secrets of all men "according to my gospel," that is, according to the principles of the gospel which Paul preached. And this illustrates the words of our Saviour, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." *To bind*, in the current language of the Jews (as illustrated by many examples), was to pronounce binding or obligatory, and *to loose*, to pronounce not obligatory, and this accords with the words of our Saviour in Matt. 23 : 4, "They [the scribes and Pharisees] bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers"; that is, they pronounce obligatory upon other things which they themselves make not the slightest effort to perform.

We need not exclude from our interpretation

of our Saviour's words respecting *binding and loosing*, the practical application of the rules and principles laid down by the apostles *to the admission of individuals to the Christian Church and to their exclusion from it*. Only we must bear in mind that this practical application has to be made by uninspired and consequently fallible men, and therefore can not claim an absolutely certain ratification in heaven of what is done on earth, while *the inspired declaration of the terms of admission to the kingdom of heaven*, being God's own word, is certain to be ratified in the judgment of the great day, and it was no presumption for Paul to say that in that day the secrets of men would be judged according to the gospel which he preached.

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MATTHEW 19: 12.

“There are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.”

Instances have occurred in which Christians have understood these words of our Saviour as referring to, and by implication commending, the becoming eunuchs literally, for the sake of the

better serving God, and so have actually mutilated themselves for this purpose. But, —

1. It is not at all harsh to understand our Lord as using this language figuratively, as he did the words in Matt. 5: 29, 30, about plucking out a right eye or cutting off a right hand (see note on that passage), and so saying for substance in this verse, There are those who from their birth have been incapable of the married relation, and there are those who have been made so by others, and there are those who, for the kingdom of heaven's sake (for the sake of more efficiently promoting the kingdom of Christ in the world) have denied themselves the comforts of the married relation, and so treated themselves as though incapable of it. The apostle Paul did this, and perhaps also John, although most of the apostles were married (1 Cor. 9: 5).

2. That this is the true import of our Saviour's words is confirmed by the fact that they were uttered in immediate response to the remark of the disciples that if the responsibilities of the married state were so great, it was better not to marry (v. 10).

MATTHEW 20 : 29.

See note on Luke 18 : 35.

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MATTHEW 21 : 18-20.

**The Barren Fig-tree.**

Compare Mark 11 : 12-14 ; 20-23.

With this chapter we enter upon that portion of Matthew's Gospel which records the closing up of our Saviour's ministry on earth. In the first eleven verses is recorded the manner of his entry into Jerusalem, designedly fulfilling the prophecy of Zech. 9 : 9, and thus manifesting himself as the promised Messiah, the King of Israel ; also, the enthusiastic greetings of the multitudes who acknowledged him with shouts of "Hosanna to the Son of David."

Next we have the exercise of his authority in casting out from the temple those that sold and bought in it, and the confirmation of that authority by miracles of healing wrought in it ; then the drying up of the fruitless fig-tree, symbolizing the rejection of unfruitful Israel ; then the silencing of the chief priests and elders who questioned his authority, by the demand that they should say whether John's baptism was from

heaven or of men ; and finally two remarkable parables, the last clearly setting forth the casting off of unbelieving and unfruitful Israel and the transferring of their privileges to believing Gentiles.

This general view of the incidents recorded in connection with the one we are considering is important as evidencing the symbolical character of the transaction.

Several difficulties present themselves in connection with this narrative :—

1. *The order of the events narrated* is not the same in Matthew and Mark. Matthew mentions the wonder of the disciples and Jesus' reply as if they had occurred immediately upon his uttering the words, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever." He also records the cleansing of the temple as if it had occurred immediately after our Saviour's triumphal entry into Jerusalem ; whereas it appears from Mark's more exact narrative that the cleansing of the temple occurred on the day after his arrival and the conversation respecting the drying up of the fig-tree on the third day. This difference of order must be referred to that characteristic of Matthew's style which led him to group together things having

relation to each other, and so occasionally to disregard the order of time. The cleansing of the temple was a prominent event closely connected with the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, and the conversation about the drying up of the fig-tree had a natural and close connection with the event itself, though occurring the day after. (See note on Matt. 8: 2-4.)

2. A second difficulty is presented by our Saviour's *appearing to expect fruit* where he must have known that none existed. This must be referred to the symbolical character of the transaction. Augustine well observes in his *Quæstiones Evangelicæ*, book ii, section 51, that "not every fiction is a falsehood. If it teaches something it is a figure of truth. Otherwise all parables would be falsehoods." And this manner of our Saviour on this occasion confirms the reference of the curse pronounced upon the barren fig-tree to the doom then impending over unfruitful Israel.

3. A third difficulty is presented by the condemnation of the tree for having no fruit, when, as Mark distinctly says, "the time of figs was not yet." Some have sought to get rid of this difficulty by reading Mark's words interrogatively, "was it not the time of figs?" but for this there

is not a particle of authority either in manuscripts or ancient versions. Besides, the facts of natural history contradict this idea. The time of this occurrence was early in April. The first ripe figs in Palestine appear in June. Others have said that some fruit *might have remained* on the tree from the preceding year. But had that been the ground of expecting any fruit upon this tree, Mark would not have added, "For the time of figs was not yet."

But the true explanation is after all very simple. The fig-tree uniformly puts forth its fruit before its leaves. This is a well-known fact, and is mentioned by Pliny in his Natural History. In April neither leaves nor fruit were ordinarily to be expected in the vicinity of Jerusalem. But this tree, by putting forth untimely leaves, seemed to give promise of equally untimely fruit. The condemnation was therefore for not having fruit corresponding with its professions. Precisely this circumstance renders it a fit emblem of false professors of religion, and especially of boasting yet unfruitful Israel, and confirms the symbolical interpretation of the transaction, in harmony with the parable at the close of the chapter, which points out the impending rejection of the Jews *for being unfruitful*.

4. The appearance of passion and unreasonable vexation in our Lord. This has been cited by unbelievers as a proof of a defective character. The impression may have been increased in some minds by the expression used by Peter, as recorded in Mark 11: 21, "the fig-tree which thou cursedst." But this impression is entirely removed if we regard the transaction as symbolical. Jesus addressed no reproachful language to the tree. He simply said, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever." We are bound therefore to understand the word *curse*, as used by Peter, not in the sense of uttering reproaches, but in that of pronouncing a doom, as in Matt. 25: 41, "Depart, ye *cursed*," where the participle employed is derived from the same verb.

In reply to the sneer of those who would regard our Saviour's language as indicative of human weakness, it is enough to ask, Can we imagine that God would work a miracle to confirm the words of a weak and passionate man?

On the other hand, if we understand the transaction as symbolical, the language of Jesus at once appears entirely consistent with calmness and divine dignity.

5. Another difficulty is presented by this narra-



tive in the fact that our Lord, in answer to Peter's remark, spoke of the transaction, not with reference to any symbolical meaning, but simply as a mighty work. The explanation is probably this: The minds of the disciples were *filled with wonder* by the effect produced by a word from their Lord, even as when he stilled the tempest or performed other striking miracles. To this feeling, shared by them all, Peter, as usual, gave utterance, and Jesus responded to it by assuring them that *faith in God* would enable them to perform still more wonderful works. Meantime, he left the matter of the drying up of the fruitless fig-tree, as he did many of his sayings and doings, for them to treasure up in their memories, and to understand fully when they should have the assistance of the Holy Spirit, after his personal presence should be withdrawn.

A word may properly be added here in regard to the *faith* by which our Saviour told his disciples that they could remove mountains. Our Lord's utterances were sometimes presented without qualifications or limitations, for the sake of making the deeper impression, where nevertheless the nature of the case requires us to regard such limitations as implied. Such maxims as, "Swear

not at all," "Resist not evil," "If any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also," are specimens. The declarations respecting the power of faith belong to this class. To insist that they must be understood absolutely without qualifications would lead, and has actually led, men in various ages to the wildest fanaticism. Many have imagined that the only faith needed was a firm persuasion *that what they desired would come to pass*; and a superficial reading of our Saviour's words might lead to their being so understood. But such a persuasion may exist where there is no faith, and what our Lord insists on is *faith*, or, as Mark (ch. 11: 22) calls it, *faith in God*. Many a zealous worker says, "I have *faith* to believe that this enterprise will succeed." But has God told him that it is to succeed? If not, his persuasion may be not faith but presumption. *Faith in God must rest upon the word of God*, either the written word or a direct revelation. It is a great mistake to suppose that a *power of working miracles* was ever conferred upon any prophet or apostle to be used *at his discretion* and *without a divine intimation*. Paul left his beloved and much-needed helper Trophimus sick at Miletum (2 Tim. 4: 20). Why?

Doubtless because he had no divine intimation on that occasion that he should heal him. So Paul prayed earnestly thrice that his thorn in the flesh might depart from him. It did not depart ; but the Lord gave him what was better than a cure of his malady : " My grace is sufficient for thee." Would Peter have dared to call the deceased sister Dorcas back to life without a direct intimation from the Spirit of God so to do ? I trow not. When Elijah on Mount Carmel prayed that fire might descend from heaven and consume his sacrifice, one thing to be demonstrated by it was that he had taken every step in that transaction by divine command. " Let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that *I have done all these things at thy word*" (1 Kings 18 : 36). We speak popularly of a prophet or an apostle as *working miracles*, and this is not incorrect. But we read also that it was God who *wrought through them* (Acts 19 : 11). God in every instance wrought the miracle, and he in like manner ordered every step and every word connected with it. And yet we can easily see that a prophet or an apostle, after receiving by inspiration a direction to go forward and perform a miracle, might be tempted to falter,

perhaps on account of the unbelief or hostility of those about him, and so would stand in need of the exhortation *to have faith in God, and not to doubt*. Especially might this be so with the apostles in the first stage of their ministry, before the pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus called Peter to come to him walking upon the water, he ought not for an instant to have doubted the power or willingness of Jesus to keep him in perfect safety. Yet when he looked at the raging of the storm, he faltered, and earned for himself the rebuke, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

When therefore our Saviour bids us believe and not doubt, he means not merely, believe that what you desire will come to pass, but, believe what God has told you respecting it, either in his written word or by direct revelation. Direct revelation in our day no one claims, unless he be a fanatic or an impostor. There remains to us therefore only *the written word* of God as a foundation for our faith in prayer. What that word promises unconditionally, we may and should pray for unconditionally. What it promises conditionally we should pray for conditionally. Since that word declares that the earth shall be filled with

the glory of the Lord, we may pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done!" But when we descend to particulars, in regard to which it is only by inference that we can regard them as included in the divine promise, we should subordinate our petitions to God's supreme will and infinite wisdom, and this is what the beloved disciple meant when he wrote (1 John 5 : 14), "If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us."

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MATTHEW 26 : 71-74.

**Peter's Three Denials.**

There is so much difference between the statements of the different evangelists in narrating Peter's second denial, that some have been led to regard the narratives as inconsistent with each other. Matthew (v. 71) says, "Another maid saw him"; Mark (ch. 14 : 69), "The maid"; Luke (ch. 22 : 59), "Another man," and John (ch. 18 : 25), "They said." This last expression affords, probably, the true explanation of the difference. We may well suppose that the first maid spoke to her companion and to others around her concerning Peter's being a disciple of

Jesus. In the prevailing excitement several persons may have addressed Peter, among whom the second female servant and one man from the crowd may have been prominent. This simple hypothesis seems to me sufficient to account for the apparently conflicting statements of the four evangelists.

Mark mentions two cock-crowings, one after Peter's first denial, probably not long after midnight, and the other after his third denial, probably near the close of the third watch of the night, which was called the watch of *the cock-crowing* (Mark 13: 35). The other evangelists mention only the latter, as they do also where they narrate how Jesus foretold Peter's denying him. (See Matt. 26: 34; Luke 22: 34; John 13: 38.) The difference is simply that Mark, very likely under the guidance of Peter himself, is more minute than the other evangelists.

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#### MATTHEW 27: 3-8.

##### Suicide of Judas. — The Field of Blood.

The statement in Acts 1: 18, 19, is not inconsistent with that in Matthew, either in respect to the mode of Judas' death, or to the purchase of

the field. If Judas hung himself from a tree on the precipitous slope of the valley of Hinnom, the breaking of a cord or of a branch might cause him to fall such a distance as to produce the result described by Luke. Then if with the money, which he in his remorse brought back to the chief priests and elders, the same field was purchased after his death, he might still be said *to have purchased it* with the reward of iniquity. Language like this would easily and naturally be used by people who knew all the circumstances, and would occasion no misunderstanding. That field would also naturally be called *the field of blood*.

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## MATTHEW 27: 9, 10.

“Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver,” etc.

The first point requiring attention here is that in our present Greek text the prophecy referred to is quoted as if from Jeremiah, while actually it is found in Zechariah, but not in Jeremiah. Several ways of accounting for this have been suggested. One is that since in ancient manuscripts proper names were usually abridged, a change might

easily have been made by copyists; but there is no evidence to support this conjecture. Another is that since in ancient Hebrew manuscripts Jeremiah was placed first among the prophetic books, a quotation from any of the prophets might be spoken of as from Jeremiah; but the text does not say, "Written in the book of Jeremiah," but, "Spoken by Jeremiah."

The most probable supposition appears to me to be that Matthew wrote neither Zechariah nor Jeremiah, but simply, "the prophet," as in chapter 21: 4, and elsewhere, and that some very early copyist added *Jeremiah*, perhaps having in mind the eighteenth chapter of Jeremiah, where the prophet records his visit to a potter; or chapter 19, in which he relates his being sent to the valley of the son of Hinnom to perform the symbolical action of breaking a potter's vessel in the sight of the elders of Israel. Augustine mentions that in his day some manuscripts omitted the name *Jeremiah*, reading simply *the prophet*. It is stated that Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome favored this reading, and this view is confirmed by the Syriac Version, made in the second century, which has simply *the prophet*, showing that the Greek text which they had before them (older by at least



two centuries than any Greek manuscript which we now have) had this reading.

We come then to the passage cited from Zechariah (ch. 11: 12, 13) which Matthew, as frequently, does not quote literally, but only gives its general sense. God had directed the prophet (v. 4) to *feed the flock*, that is, to do the work of a pastor for the people. This he did (v. 7), and invited them, if disposed, to furnish the means for his support (probably for a year; compare Judges 17: 10). They, putting a low estimate upon his spiritual work, gave him thirty pieces (*shekels*) of silver. This the Lord regarded as a dishonor done to himself, and bade the prophet to cast it to the potter, who was then "in the house of the Lord," that is, probably furnishing in the court of the temple some of his cheap earthenware, for inferior uses in the temple service.

The application to the events narrated by Matthew is not difficult, constituting a *fulfillment* in the wider sense of that term. Once more *thirty pieces of silver were paid*, and that by the Jewish rulers, as the price of the betrayal of the Messiah, the Shepherd of Israel, and when returned by despairing Judas, were again *cast to a potter*, paid as the price of a desolate field in

the valley of the son of Hinnom (probably the very field in which the traitor hanged himself ; see Acts 1 : 18, 19), as a burying-place for strangers, which from the appalling circumstances in which it was acquired received among the people the name *Aceldama, the field of blood*.

In reference to the expression, *Then was fulfilled*, see note on Matt. 1 : 22, 23.

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#### MATTHEW 27 : 37.

“This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.”

Compare Mark 15 : 26, “The King of the Jews”; Luke 23 : 38, “This is the King of the Jews”; John 19 : 19, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”

The superscription upon the cross of Jesus is thus given with different degrees of fullness, Matthew and John giving it more fully, and Mark and Luke more briefly ; but all mention the essential fact that Pilate designated Jesus, not as a robber, or murderer, or exciter of sedition, but simply as that remarkable person commonly called *the King of the Jews*. As the superscription was written in three languages, — Hebrew, the peculiar language of the Jews ; Latin, the language of the Roman governor, and Greek, the

common language used by all,—it is not improbable that it may have been expressed more fully in the uppermost inscription, and less so in those that followed.

From these variations, and from the verbal differences in the mention of the voice which came from heaven at the time of our Lord's baptism and in the different narratives of the institution of the Lord's Supper, we learn that the sacred writers were more concerned to give the general sense of utterances which they record than the exact words.

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MATTHEW 28: 1-10.

**The Appearances of Jesus to his Disciples  
After his Resurrection.**

In narrating the events connected with the resurrection of our Lord, no one of them has undertaken to give a complete history of them all. Hence we find occasionally an *appearance* of disagreement, from which unbelievers have taken occasion to represent the narratives as not worthy of confidence. Had it pleased the Holy Spirit to give us all the details, no doubt those which we

now have would be seen to be perfectly consistent with each other.

The following outline of the probable order of these events may aid the diligent student of the New Testament in clearing away the difficulties of the narrative.

The resurrection occurred at or before the earliest dawn on the first day of the week. Very early Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James and Joses, Joanna, Salome, and others, having prepared spices, hasten to the Saviour's tomb, with the purpose of anointing the body, in addition to what had been hastily done at the time of its burial. On their way they inquire among themselves whom they can find to roll away the stone from the door of the tomb, evidently having no knowledge of the sealing of the stone and the setting of the watch on the preceding day, which they had religiously kept as a day of rest at their own dwellings. On arriving at the tomb they find it open. An angel of the Lord had rolled away the stone, a being of so glorious an appearance that the guards were frightened and "became as dead men." Of this the women had as yet no knowledge, and so, not finding the body of their Lord, "they were amazed." Mary Magdalene

at once runs to tell Peter and John. The other women linger there and soon are permitted to see a vision of angels, who tell them that the Lord is risen, and bid them go and tell his disciples. They then go, probably not all together, to tell other disciples, doubtless knowing that Mary had gone to tell Peter and John. On the way Jesus himself meets them, bids them not fear, and gives them a message to his disciples.

Meantime, Peter and John hasten to visit the sepulcher. Mary follows them, but not so rapidly, and when they return to the city she remains without the sepulcher weeping. Looking in she sees two angels who speak to her, and then turning around sees Jesus himself. As to the question whether this appearance of our Lord to Mary or that to the other women occurred first, see note on Mark 16: 9.

The remaining recorded appearances of our Lord are:—

1. To Peter, mentioned by Luke (24: 34) and by Paul (1 Cor. 15: 5). From the former passage it is evident that the appearance to Peter occurred before the return of the two disciples from Emmaus, probably after they left the city going to Emmaus. See Luke 24: 22.

2. To the two disciples going to Emmaus in the afternoon, mentioned by Mark (16: 12, 13) and Luke (24: 13-35).

3. To ten of the apostles (Thomas not being present) in the evening of the same day, mentioned by Mark, Luke, John, and Paul.

4. To the eleven apostles a week later (still at Jerusalem), mentioned by John only (ch. 20: 26-29).

5. To seven of the apostles on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, mentioned by John only (ch. 21: 1-23).

6. To the apostles and about five hundred other brethren, on a mountain in Galilee, mentioned by Matthew (ch. 28: 16-20) and Paul (1 Cor. 15: 6).

7. To James, mentioned by Paul only (1 Cor. 15: 7).

8. To the eleven apostles at the time of his ascension, mentioned by Luke (Acts 1: 4-11) and by Paul (1 Cor. 15: 7).

There may have been other appearances during the forty days intervening between our Lord's resurrection and his ascension, briefly alluded to in Acts 1: 3, but not recorded.

MATTHEW 28 : 16, 17.

**Interview of Jesus with the Disciples in  
Galilee.**

Matthew informs us that the eleven disciples went into Galilee to the mountain which Jesus had designated, and Paul (1 Cor. 15 : 6) informs us that after the other recorded appearances Jesus appeared to more than five hundred brethren at once. There can scarcely be a doubt that these two statements refer to the same occasion. Our Lord's ministry had been mainly in Galilee, and the number of those who there believed on him was doubtless greater than in Judæa. We read that the number of believers who assembled in Jerusalem for special prayer after the ascension (doubtless including some from Galilee) was only about a hundred and twenty (Acts 1 : 15). It was natural that our Saviour should designate a place for his last solemn interview with his disciples in the region where most of them resided. Matthew's remark also, that on the mountain in Galilee *some doubted*, implies the presence there of others besides the apostles ; for it is incredible that any of the apostles should doubt after the interview, when Thomas was present, a week after the resurrection.

There were the best of reasons why our Saviour did not show himself openly to all the people (thus gratifying their curiosity), but only to chosen witnesses (Acts 10: 41). This last solemn interview on the mountain in Galilee with the apostles and the multitude of believers together, and the tender farewell words then and there spoken, must have left an ineffaceable impression on their minds (although there were still a few doubters) and have greatly helped and strengthened them for the carrying out of the great commission which he then gave, not to the apostles only, but to all, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

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MARK 2 : 26.

"In the days of Abiathar the high priest."

In the Old Testament record of the event to which our Lord here refers (1 Sam. 21), the high priest who permitted David to take and eat the show-bread is called Ahimelech, and his son, who alone escaped when his father and all the other priests at Nob were slain by command of Saul, is called Abiathar (ch. 22).

Some have explained this apparent discrepancy



by supposing that the Abiathar mentioned by our Lord was the son, who almost immediately became high priest in consequence of his father's death, joined David and shared his wanderings, and continued in office during the whole forty years of David's reign (sharing the duties of the high priesthood with Zadok). Becoming thus well known as a friend of David and high priest during his reign, and having been present at the time of the incident referred to (and perhaps active in giving the sacred loaves to David, by his father's direction), the incident might be spoken of as having occurred *in his days*.

This is a possible explanation. But there is another which seems to me to be better. On further examination of the Old Testament records we find that in the summary notice of the reign of David in 2 Sam. 8: 15-18, the high priest during that reign is called *Ahimelech, the son of Abiathar*, and in the same brief notice repeated in 1 Chron. 18: 14-17, *Abimelech the son of Abiathar*. In both cases the father (who permitted David to take and eat the show-bread) is called Abiathar, as in the New Testament. Hence we may fairly conclude that the original name of both father and son was Abiathar, but

that both in their later years received the surname of Ahimelech (*brother of the king*), the father as being a friend and companion of Saul, and the son as the faithful friend and companion of David, and that thus, in the earlier and contemporary record (1 Sam. 21), the father was called by his acquired surname Ahimelech, and the son by his original name Abiathar, while in the later record of David's reign (2 Sam. 8 : 17), the son is designated by the surname Ahimelech, which he had acquired as David's friend, and the father by his original name Abiathar. Thus Abiathar would remain in use in later times, and would naturally be employed in the New Testament as the name of the father. This is far better than to assume (as some have done) confusion or blundering in the Old Testament record.

*Abimelech* in 1 Chron. 18 : 16 *may* also have been a surname given to Abiathar II (meaning *father*, that is, friend *of the king*), or, since, as is well known, the text of the Chronicles has not been as accurately preserved as that of the other books of the Old Testament, it may be the mistake of an early copyist for Ahimelech.

That the Jews sometimes gave to a son the name of his father is evident from Luke 1 : 59, where it

is related that at the circumcision of John the Baptist the friends and neighbors present desired to have him called Zacharias, after his father.

This view of the matter has the advantage that it clears up, not only an apparent discrepancy between the passage in Mark and the narrative in 1 Samuel, but also one between different passages in the Old Testament.

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MARK 4: 12.

"That seeing they may see, and not perceive," etc.

The parallel passage in Luke 8: 10 resembles this: "That seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand." But in the corresponding passage in Matt. 13: 13 we find, "Because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand."

Probably our Saviour used both forms of expression in answer to the inquiry of his disciples, "Why speakest thou unto them in parables?" reported by all three of the evangelists. We should ever bear in mind that we have not our Lord's discourses in full but only brief abstracts of them.

The language in the commission given to Isaiah (Is. 6: 9, 10), "Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not; make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes," etc., and the corresponding utterances of our Saviour, as reported by Mark and Luke, have at first sight a very stern aspect, seeming to imply that God desires the destruction of sinners, and sends his messages to them in a manner designed to bring about that result. But since God has plainly declared that he has no pleasure in the destruction of sinners, but desires that they should turn from their evil ways and live (see Ezek. 33: 11, etc.), we are bound to understand the words addressed to Isaiah as simply a bold and highly figurative method of saying, "Go, preach to this people to repent and turn from their evil ways, but know that they will not hearken to your solemn message, but will go on in their sins and perish;" and this interpretation is confirmed by the prophet's question (Is. 6: 11), "Lord, how long?" to which the Lord answers, "Until . . . the land be utterly desolate;" that is, such will be their disregard of my gracious messages.

Now unquestionably we should interpret our Saviour's words reported by Mark and Luke in the same way. It is as if he had said, I speak in dark sayings *to test the sincerity and docility of my hearers*. If they desire to understand them they shall be further instructed. But if, as is the fact with the majority, they are indifferent, they shall be left to go their own chosen way, and to be filled with the fruits of their own devices.

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MARK 6 : 8.

"Save a staff only."

See note on Matt. 10 : 10.

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MARK 6 : 45.

"To go before to the other side, unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people."

There is an apparent discrepancy between this statement and that in John 6 : 15, where it is said that they entered the boat to go to, or toward, Capernaum. But this entirely disappears when we notice the relative position of the several places. The feeding of the five thousand took

place not far from Bethsaida (Luke 9: 10), probably about three miles south-east from that town. The disciples wished to return to Capernaum, where they resided, and in so doing they would pass by Bethsaida, where Jesus, had he chosen to do so, could have joined them after dismissing the multitudes. The storm seems to have driven them somewhat to the south of Capernaum, before Jesus rejoined them, and so they came to land on the western shore of the lake, in the region called Gennesaret.

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MARK 9: 49.

“Every one shall be salted with fire,” etc.

The difficulty in interpreting these words of our Saviour arises from the fact that *fire* is employed in the Scriptures as an emblem of *consecration*, of *trial* and *purification*, and of *punishment*. When the pious Israelite presented the fat of his peace-offerings to be burned upon the altar, he indicated the *consecration* of himself and all that he had to God. The idea of *acceptance* of the consecration was superadded when the Lord by fire from heaven consumed the sacrifice.

When God by his prophet Zechariah says, “I

will bring the third part [the remnant of Israel] through the fire," or by Malachi (ch. 3 : 2) that the Messiah should be like a refiner's fire, he indicates in a striking manner the *testing and purifying* of his own people, alluding, of course, to the trying and refining of gold and silver.

And when at the last day the judge shall say to the wicked, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," these words will set forth by a fearful emblem the *punishment* of his incorrigible enemies.

Much of the perplexity of the commentators seems to me to have arisen from the idea that in interpreting our Saviour's words our attention must be confined to only *one* of the symbolical uses of fire referred to above. Hence some have explained the words "salted with fire" solely of *future punishment*, appealing to the awful declarations in vs. 44, 46, and 48, that "their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched"; others, of the *trials* which must be endured by true Christians, in order that they may be purged from their dross, appealing to the preceding exhortation to cut off an offending right hand, and to pluck out an offending right eye; others, of the *preservation* of the wicked *from annihilation* in the midst of

their punishment, appealing to the familiar use of salt as preserving from corruption.

But do we not get the best view of our Lord's meaning by understanding him as alluding, not to one alone of the symbolical uses of the term fire, as found in the Scriptures, but to them *all combined*? That the idea of the punishment of the wicked is not to be excluded seems evident from the words immediately preceding, "their fire is not quenched." That there is an allusion to the offering of sacrifices by fire, and particularly to Lev. 2: 13, where it is enjoined that salt should accompany every offering, is almost equally certain, and is admitted even by those who reject the last clause of this verse, "and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." This clause is omitted from the text of the Revised Version of the English Bible. But as it is found in the Syriac, Latin Vulgate, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Slavic versions, as well as in most copies of the Greek, and as, moreover, the transition to the thought of verse 50, "Salt is good," etc., is easy and natural with this clause, but seems abrupt and harsh without it, I think it should be retained. That the thought of the purification and preservation of his disciples



was present to our Saviour's mind appears from his going on immediately to say, "Salt is good," and "Have salt in yourselves."

We get then, as I apprehend it, our blessed Saviour's true meaning if we understand him as saying to his disciples, Deny yourselves every thing which would lead you into sin; *for* "every one shall be salted with fire." It is a necessary part of your training for the kingdom of heaven, that you should pass through fiery trials; and in order to your becoming acceptable sacrifices, well pleasing to God, you must have the salt of divine grace, as the ancient sacrifices, offered by fire, were always to be accompanied by "the salt of the covenant of God." But if you do not so deny yourselves, and have not the grace symbolized by this salt, still "every one shall be salted with fire." If the baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire does not refine and purify you, the fire of God's holiness and justice will overtake and consume you in the future world.

To the injunction, "Have salt in yourselves," that is, yield yourselves to the gracious influences of God's Spirit, which he has authorized you to ask and receive, the Saviour adds, "Have peace one with another," thus reverting to the subject

of their dispute as to who should be greatest, mentioned in verse 34, out of which grew the whole discourse on self-denial and on the consequences of exercising or of neglecting it.

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MARK 11 : 12-14, 20-23.

**The Barren Fig-tree.**

See note on Matt. 21 : 18-20.

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MARK 13 : 32.

“Neither the Son.”

The Revised Version inserts these words also in Matt. 24 : 36, noting in the margin that many authorities omit them. But since they are not there found in the Syriac Version, the oldest of our authorities on such points, they should either have been placed in the margin, or, if in the text, in brackets. Such a passage seems much more likely to have been added from Mark than, if genuine, to have been omitted from so many manuscripts and versions.

Here in Mark, however, they are undisputed, and give rise to the question how the Son of God could be ignorant of the day and hour referred

to. Some, as Augustine, have sought to interpret Christ's words as meaning simply that he *did not wish to reveal* the day or the hour of his coming, and refer us to the words of Paul in 1 Cor. 2 : 2, "I determined *not to know* [that is, not to speak of] anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." But in the words of Paul the force of *to know* is qualified by the following words *among you*. On the contrary, in the passage under consideration its meaning is shown to be literal by the strong expressions *no one, not even the angels*. It is far better therefore to accept the statement as literally true of our Saviour, that even he did not know the day and the hour. Whether we can understand and explain the limitation of his powers in his state of humiliation or not, we accept the fact on divine testimony. As man he *grew in wisdom*, as well as in stature (Luke 2 : 52). He *received from the Father* honor and glory (2 Pet. 1 : 17), was raised by the Father from the dead (Acts 2 : 24 ; Gal. 1 : 1), and exalted to his own right hand (Acts 5 : 31 ; Phil. 2 : 9), designated by the Father to judge the quick and the dead (John 5 : 22 ; Acts 10 : 42), and what is specially analogous to the passage under consideration, he

*received from the Father* the revelation which through his beloved disciple he communicated to all his servants (Rev. 1 : 1).

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MARK 15 : 25.

See note on John 19 : 14.

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MARK 16 : 2.

“At the rising of the sun.”

This expression at first view seems inconsistent with that in John 20 : 1, “while it was yet dark.” But Mark himself says in the beginning of the same verse that it was “very early.” Luke also says, “very early in the morning,” and Matthew says, “as it began to dawn.” All four of the evangelists agree in saying that it was *very early*. Now it is clear that the two expressions in the same verse (Mark 16 : 2) should not be so understood as to make them contradict each other. If therefore the language of Mark was intended to designate literal sunrise, we must understand (with West, Benson, and others) that the women set out from their homes “very early” and

reached the sepulcher about sunrise. Robinson, however, and others understand by "the rising of the sun" here the first appearance of the morning light, and appeal for this meaning to Judges 9: 33 and Ps. 104: 22, remarking that an enemy would not wait for sunrise to make his attack, and that wild beasts retreat to their lairs at the first appearance of morning light.

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MARK 16: 9.

"He appeared first to Mary Magdalene."

From Matt. 28: 9 we should naturally *infer* that our Lord's first appearance was to the other women, or to Mary and the others together. But from John 20: 2 it is manifest that Mary left the other women at the sepulcher, and went alone to tell Peter and John; also, from verse 11, etc., that she was alone when she saw Jesus. Some excellent interpreters understand *first* in Mark 16: 9 as meaning not absolutely the first appearance of the risen Saviour, but *the first of the three appearances recorded by Mark*, and so regard that to the other women as the first and this to Mary as the second.

But the time occupied by Mary's running to

tell Peter and John and by their visit to the sepulcher was evidently very brief. We may easily suppose the other women to have remained there until near the time of the visit of Peter and John, and that they were longer on their way, perhaps going to more distant parts of the city, and thus that our Saviour's appearance to Mary close by the tomb may have preceded that to the other women. This supposition seems to give the most simple and natural interpretation to the language in Mark 16:9.

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LUKE 2: 39.

**The Return to Galilee and Residence in Nazareth.**

Luke here omits any mention of the visit of the wise men of the East, of the hostility and cruelty of Herod, and of the flight into Egypt. But so, on the other hand, does Matthew omit any mention of the angelic appearances to Zacharias, to Mary, and to the shepherds; of the circumcision of Jesus; of his presentation in the temple; and of the remarkable utterances of Simeon and Anna. But neither of them denies or contradicts

the statements of the other. Had we only Luke's Gospel we should *infer* that the return to Nazareth *immediately* succeeded the presentation in the temple. But Luke does not affirm this. The residence of Joseph and Mary had been at Nazareth before the birth of Jesus, and the family *returned there*, and continued to reside there for some thirty years. This almost unbroken residence at the despised Galilæan town Luke records. The main difficulty arises from his *not recording* other important events. In reference to this three remarks may be offered:—

1. The narratives of all Four Gospels relate mainly to the time of Christ's *public ministry*, containing very little (two of the four, nothing) concerning his childhood and youth.

2. No one of the evangelists attempted to record all that Jesus did during his life upon earth. (See the last verse of John's Gospel.) Otherwise the first three Gospels would not have failed to record the raising of Lazarus (one of the most stupendous of our Saviour's miracles), and the fourth would not have omitted his temptation in the wilderness, or the institution of the Lord's Supper.

3. The Gospels were not discredited by the

early Church on account of their *omissions*. All four were from the beginning received by all devout Christians as divinely inspired books.

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LUKE 5: 1-11.

**The Call of Peter, Andrew, James, and John.**

See note on Matt. 4: 18-22.

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LUKE 6: 1.

“The second Sabbath after the first.”

The literal rendering of the adjective here used (and found nowhere else) is *second-first*. The Revised Version omits it, but notes in the margin that “many ancient authorities insert *second-first*.” It would seem much easier to suppose such a word to have been omitted by some doubting copyist, than to account for its insertion if not genuine. It probably signifies the first weekly Sabbath after the second day of the Passover. From that second day of the Passover commenced the reckoning of the seven weeks between the Passover and Pentecost (Lev. 23: 15, 16), which



latter festival was also called the Feast of Weeks (Deut. 16: 10-16). The weekly Sabbath following that day might be called second-first, as being *second*, reckoning from the first day of the Pass-over festival,<sup>1</sup> but *first* in the reckoning for Pentecost.

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LUKE 6: 20-49.

See note on Matt. 5-7.

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LUKE 7: 37, 38.

### Anointing Jesus' Feet.

Some have supposed that the anointing here recorded is the same with that recorded of Mary, sister of Lazarus, in John 12: 3-8 (mentioned also in Matt. 26: 6-13 and Mark 14: 3-9). In both cases Jesus was sitting at meat, and in both it is in the house of a man named Simon. But it is impossible that they can be the same. After the anointing recorded by Luke, Jesus took a journey (Luke 8: 1), but the other anointing

<sup>1</sup> This, like other festivals, occurring on fixed days of the month, was called a Sabbath, as being a day on which no work was to be done. Compare Lev. 23: 7, 24, 32.

occurred during the week preceding his crucifixion. Neither is there the slightest ground for identifying the woman mentioned in Luke 7: 37 with Mary Magdalene.

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LUKE 9: 3.

“Neither staves [a staff].”

See note on Matt. 10: 10.

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LUKE 12: 10.

**Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit.**

See note on Matt. 12: 31, 32.

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LUKE 12: 49.

“I am come to set fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?”

The Revised Version renders this verse, “I came to cast fire upon the earth; and what will I, if it is already kindled?” *To cast fire* is a literal rendering of *πῦρ βαλεῖν*, meaning to set on fire, to start a conflagration.

Some commentators labor to show that by send-

ing fire our Saviour meant sending the Holy Spirit with his purifying influences ; but it seems to me far better (with Calvin, Doddridge, Olshausen, and many others) to understand him as saying, I came to start a work in the world, which will be like setting it on fire, such will be the conflict which will inevitably result from it. And with this accord the words following, namely, "what will I, if it is already kindled?" The conflict is already begun. It would seem as if I had nothing more to do here. *But*, I have a baptism, etc. Our Lord's work on earth would not be complete until he had endured those sufferings by which he was to make atonement for the sins of the world. What anguish this remaining portion of his work would cost him, both in the anticipation and in the endurance of his sufferings, until the solemn moment when he could say, "It is finished!"

Those who understand the *fire* as meaning the influence of the Holy Spirit, generally change the rendering of the last clause, reading it, "What will I *but that it were* already kindled?" or, "What do I wish? *Oh, that it were* already kindled!" But these renderings do violence to Greek idiom. *Εἰ* with an indicative verb, as here,

almost always signifies, *if* a thing *is actually* done.

The interpretation given above accords also with what follows in verses 51-53: "Suppose ye that I am come to send peace on the earth?" etc.

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### LUKE 16 : 9.

"The mammon of unrighteousness."

*Mammon* signifies riches as that in which men are apt to *trust*, being derived from a Hebrew verb meaning *to trust*. "Mammon of unrighteousness," by a Hebraism, means *unrighteous mammon*, not wealth unjustly acquired, but *false riches*, worldly wealth which is not worthy to be called wealth, an *unreliable trust*. That this is the meaning of the phrase is proved by the contrast in verse 11 between the *false* and the *true* riches. "If ye have not been faithful in the *unrighteous mammon* [that is, the false riches], who will commit to your trust the *true riches*?" To bestow ill-gotten wealth in charity not only would make no atonement for the injustice by which it was acquired, but would be an abomination in the sight of God; but to use worldly wealth in accordance with his

will, accounting him as its owner and ourselves as merely his stewards, will secure (as the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament declare) a *reward*, not of merit but of grace. Christ himself, the Judge, will say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," and *he and his poor disciples*, whom we have befriended, will bid us a joyful welcome to *everlasting habitations*, infinitely superior to those which the unjust steward secured by his shrewdness.<sup>1</sup>

More minutely than this it does not seem necessary to interpret the figurative language here employed by our Saviour.

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LUKE 18 : 7.

"And shall not God avenge [vindicate] his own elect . . . though he bear long with them?"

It is hardly necessary to remark that *avenge*

<sup>1</sup>The question is sometimes asked, Why is the unjust steward represented as releasing the one debtor from half and the other from only a fifth part of his debt? The reason for this probably lies in the fact that twenty *cors* of wheat would be considerably more valuable than fifty *baths* of oil.

It may be worth while to add the remark that *δέξαι* in the phrase "take thy bill" (vs. 6 and 7) is a middle verb, and has the force of *take to thyself*, conveying an implication that the debtor in each *took back* his bond, and wrote instead *another* for a less amount.

does not mean *take vengeance*, but simply *vindicate, secure justice for*. The principal doubt in the interpretation of the verse rests on the last clause, "though he bear long with them," R. V., "and he is longsuffering over them." This is literal, but still ambiguous. There is also a difference in the reading of the Greek, some manuscripts having an indicative verb and some a participle. I think the sense is best brought out by rendering the preposition (which the A. V. renders *with*, and the R. V., more literally, *over*) *in regard to*, a meaning which it may well bear. The sense will then be, *though he forbears in reference to them*; that is, although in the exercise of divine forbearance he delays for a time to punish their persecutors, and thus to vindicate his own people. This delay appears long to the sufferers, but it is a wise delay, exercising the faith and patience of believers, and giving their persecutors space for repentance, and at last it will be seen that it was not a long delay, but that, all things considered, the vindication was *speedy*.

LUKE 18 : 35-43.

**Healing of two blind men near Jericho.**

Compare Matt. 20 : 29-34 and Mark 10 : 46-52.

Mark and Luke here speak of the restoration of sight to *one* blind man ; Matthew speaks of two. The case is similar to that of the demoniacs of Gadara.

It is more difficult to account satisfactorily for the statements in respect to the time when the miracle was performed. Matthew and Mark narrate it as having taken place when Jesus was departing from Jericho, while Luke seems to describe it as having taken place during his approach to the city. Several ways of harmonizing these statements have been proposed.

1. Our Lord may have stayed some days in Jericho, and during the time may have gone to places in the vicinity, and this miracle may have been performed as he was making some such excursion. Thus in one sense he would be departing from the city, but if on the east side of the city, in reference to the main journey towards Jerusalem, he might be considered as still approaching it.

2. The Greek word here rendered *was come nigh* (or, *drew nigh*, R. V.) has by some been rendered *was near*; and those who adopt this rendering suppose that the miracle was performed when Jesus was finally leaving Jericho, but was still near that city. This, however, does not seem to be a natural interpretation of the word.

3. Lightfoot suggests that Jesus may have healed one blind man on entering the city, and another on leaving it. But this supposition fails entirely to account for the two miracles being reported as occurring together.

4. Perhaps the best explanation of all may be found in the supposition that Jesus lodged *to the east of Jericho, out of the city*, and so when starting to go to Jerusalem had to pass through it, and that the miracle was performed as he was so *entering the city for the sake of leaving it*. This hypothesis seems to me to be confirmed by the language of Luke 19: 1, "Jesus entered and passed through Jericho." It is true that we must then suppose that our Saviour did not spend a night at the house of Zacchæus, but only a portion of the day, and then went on his way towards Jerusalem. This, however, is entirely consistent with his language addressed to Zacchæus, "To-day I must abide [or *stop*] at thy house."



LUKE 22 : 54-62.

**Peter's Three Denials.**

See note on Matt. 26 : 71-75.

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JOHN 1 : 16.

"Grace for grace."

The *fullness* of which all believers receive is the *fullness of grace* mentioned in verse 14 as inhering in Christ, the fifteenth verse being parenthetic. The word made flesh is "full of grace." Of this fullness all believers are made partakers, receiving *grace for grace*; that is, as I understand it, grace in the believer *corresponding to* grace in the Saviour. We are made partakers of his character. Being joined to him by living faith, we become partakers of his meekness, humility, love, devotion, compassion, — all the graces of his holy character. These are indeed primarily *graces* or *favors* received from God, but also secondarily *graces* or *beauties* of the Christian character. In both senses we receive them from the fullness of Christ. For this secondary use of the term see

2 Cor. 8 : 6, 7, "this grace also," and 2 Pet. 3 : 18, "grow in grace."

The principal interpretations of this passage differing from the above are : —

1. The abounding grace of the new dispensation *instead of* the partial grace of the old. This preserves the most usual signification of the preposition *ἀντί* here employed. This was Chrysostom's interpretation. He probably took his cue from the following verse, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." But the contrast in verse 17 is not between differing *degrees of grace*, but between *law* and *grace*.

2. *Grace upon grace*, abounding grace. A passage from a classical writer is quoted in favor of this interpretation, where "griefs for griefs" seems to be used in the sense of *griefs succeeding griefs*. This is a possible but a very infrequent use of *ἀντί*.

3. That proposed by the learned Hugo Grotius, namely, *grace of mere grace*, abounding grace. But this assumes a use of the preposition *for* entirely unsupported by usage, and seems to me inadmissible.

The interpretation which I have preferred above seems to me to be sustained by those passages

which speak of believers as *putting on Christ* (Rom. 13 : 14; Gal. 3 : 27), or, as *coming to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ* (Eph. 4 : 13).

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JOHN 5 : 3, 4.

I do not attempt to treat this passage, because the first question relates to its genuineness, and I have not within reach the means for an original investigation of this point.

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JOHN 10 : 34-36.

"Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods," etc.

Two difficulties have been felt by readers of this passage : one, that an argument in justification of Jesus' calling himself the Son of God seems drawn from a passage in the Old Testament in which judges are called *gods*, while the text quoted, Ps. 82 : 6, does not say, Ye are gods, but simply, *I said*, Ye are gods ; the other, that there seems to be a *letting down* of his claim to be the *Son of God* in the highest sense.

In regard to the first point I remark that what

the Psalmist wrote in Ps. 82 : 6, "I said, Ye are gods," etc., alluded directly to the language of verse 1 : "He judgeth among the gods." Here, as also in Ex. 7 : 1 ; 21 : 6 ; 22 : 8, 9, judges are called gods.<sup>1</sup> The argument of our Saviour then is that the Jews should not condemn him whom the Father had sent as his messenger to men, for calling himself the Son of God, since their own Scriptures, the supreme authority of which they recognized, had called *gods* those to whom the word of God came, that is, those who were made the depositories of his law and set to administer justice in his name.

Viewed in this light the second difficulty disappears. There is no waiving of our Saviour's claims, but simply a *comparison*. If your own holy Scriptures (no word of which can be broken or deprived of its force) call those whom God has set to administer justice in his name *gods* and

<sup>1</sup> In other words, God, the supreme Judge, and men who act as judges are called by the same name. The best lexicographers regard both אֱלֹהִים and אֱלֹהִים as cognate with אָמַן to swear and an oath. See note at the end of art. אֱלֹהִים in Robinson's Gesenius.

The R. V. in Ex. xxi and xxii render אֱלֹהִים God; but the use of the *article* in the repeated phrase, "shall come before *the* *elohim*," is a strong objection to this, and quite decisive against it is the fact that in the phrase, "whom the *elohim* shall condemn," the verb *shall condemn* in Hebrew is plural.

*children of the Most High*, how much more may I, whom the Father has set apart and sent as his messenger to men, be called his Son !

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JOHN 16 : 9-11.

### The Work of the Holy Spirit.

This is twofold :—(1) To convince men *of the truth* in respect to sin, righteousness, and judgment, and (2) To work in them by means of the truth *a great moral change*. In both these aspects the Spirit's work relates to three particulars, sin, righteousness, and judgment.

1. In reference to *sin* there is no special difficulty in interpreting our Saviour's words. The scribes and priests had charged *him* with sin, because he did not conform to their traditional interpretations of the law (John 9 : 24). *He* charged *them* with sin because they rejected him, whom the Father had sent (John 8 : 24). The Holy Spirit would convince men, not only of the great sinfulness of rejecting God's testimony concerning Christ, but also that that rejection was the source of all other sin, and so the ground of condemnation.

2. The principal difficulty in interpreting this passage relates to the second particular, *righteousness*; and here two questions arise, namely, What is the righteousness here referred to? and How is the Spirit's convincing the world of righteousness connected with Christ's going to the Father and being no more seen in the world?

In regard to the nature of the righteousness to which our Saviour here refers, some commentators insist that it is solely the righteousness or rectitude of Christ, which the Spirit would vindicate by convincing men that his opposers had been wholly in the wrong and Jesus wholly in the right. This he would undoubtedly do; but I am persuaded that this was not all which our Saviour meant. If men were convinced that *unbelief*, the rejection of the Saviour, was *the great sin and source of sin*, then must they go on, and under the teaching of the Spirit be convinced that *faith*, or the acceptance of the Saviour, is the only way to the attainment of *righteousness*. The analogy of what is here said of sin and of righteousness seems to me to demand that this idea of *the righteousness which is by faith* should be included in our Lord's words concerning the Spirit's convincing men of righteousness.

With this in mind we are prepared to understand why this work of the Spirit could not be performed until Jesus was glorified. *He* brought in "everlasting righteousness;" but that righteousness could not be fully preached nor fully applied by the Holy Spirit until Christ's work on earth was done and he seated at the Father's right hand. Hence it was *expedient* that he should go away from his disciples so far as his bodily presence was concerned, because consistently with the divine plan the Holy Spirit could not come and do his all-important work until Jesus had so withdrawn.

3. *Judgment* here signifies condemnation. Satan would be condemned, and of the certainty of this the Holy Spirit would convince men, and also that if they yielded to the seductions of Satan and did his works, they would share in his condemnation.

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JOHN 18: 16-27.

### Peter's Three Denials.

See note on Matt. 26: 71-75.

## JOHN 19: 14

“The sixth hour.”

“It was . . . about the sixth hour,” namely, when Pilate brought Jesus out and said, Behold your King. But from Mark 15: 25 we learn that Jesus was crucified about the *third* hour. This has led some commentators to suppose that John used a different mode of reckoning, and intended by the sixth hour the sixth hour after midnight, namely, the hour of sunrise. It is true that the Romans reckoned the *day* as beginning and ending at midnight. Still they reckoned the twelve hours of the day as beginning at sunrise and ending at sunset, just as did the Jews, a mode of reckoning which John himself elsewhere uses (ch. 1: 39. See also 4: 6 and 4: 52).

The most probable solution of the difficulty seems to be the supposition that John wrote “the third hour,” not the sixth. Numbers, it is well known, were expressed in ancient manuscripts by letters. The characters for three and six ( $\Gamma'$  and  $\varsigma'$ , or  $\epsilon'$ ) are nearly alike, and probably some ancient copyist by mistake wrote  $\varsigma'$  or  $\epsilon'$ , instead of  $\Gamma'$ . This was the opinion of Eusebius, who wrote in the fourth century. Dr. S. T. Bloomfield,



in his note on this passage, says, “This reading [the third hour] is found in seven of the best MSS., some fathers, as Eusebius (who says it was so written in the autograph), Jerome, Severus, Ammonius, and Theophylact.”

In a matter of so much notoriety as the time of our Saviour’s crucifixion it can not for a moment be supposed (even aside from the inspiration of the evangelists) that they should have made a difference of three hours.

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JOHN 20 : 17.

“Touch me not ; for I am not yet ascended to my Father.”

Various conjectures have been offered as to the reason why our Lord addressed these words to Mary. The other women “held him by the feet and worshipped him ” (Matt. 28 : 9), and he did not forbid them. To the apostles he said on the evening of the same day, “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself : handle me and see.” To Thomas, a week later, he said : “Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side ; and be not faithless, but believing.” Why, then, did he forbid Mary to touch him ? or rather, *to cling to him*, for

the verb is not unitive, as if to forbid a single touch, but in a form indicating an action repeated or protracted.

The answer is probably to be found in Mary's more intense feeling of devotion, which would lead her to cling to him and not let him go; to cling also to those methods of manifesting her feelings to which she had been accustomed before his death, not realizing the fact that hereafter the disciples were to be permitted to enjoy a higher and more spiritual communion with him than ever before. Thomas was slow to believe that the Lord was risen. Jesus, in condescension to his weakness, bids him examine his wounds, and so satisfy himself that his Saviour really stands before him alive. The weak, but true, disciple's faith is strengthened, and he cries, My Lord, and my God! Mary had no such doubts. She heard his familiar voice, and saw his dear face; she *knew* that her Lord and Saviour stood before her, *alive from the dead*. But she needed to be taught that better things were in store for her and for all Christ's true disciples. Their dear Lord had not yet ascended — had not entirely closed his earthly visit with them, but would give them a few more precious interviews and then would depart, as to

his bodily presence, ascend to *his and their Father*, and send the Spirit through whose influence they might rise to a higher plane of communion and fellowship with him, which they and all who through their word should believe on him would enjoy to the end of the world. So Jesus cuts short the present interview, which Mary would have desired to prolong, and gives her instead an active service to perform for him, a message to bear to his discouraged disciples, whom he graciously styles *his brethren*, which was at the same time a lesson of joy and hope for herself.

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JOHN 20 : 23.

"Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted,"  
etc.

See the last part of note on Matt. 16 : 16-20.

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JOHN 20 : 26.

"After eight days."

If it be asked why the apostles remained a whole week in Jerusalem after they had seen the risen Saviour and received his charge to go and

meet him (with other believers) in Galilee, the answer is that the solemnities of the passover might naturally detain them until Friday. Then followed the Sabbath, on which they would not travel. They may also have had some reason to anticipate another visit from the Saviour on the first day of the week, or may have been prevented from starting on that day by other considerations. Shortly after (John 21 : 1), we find them on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

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#### ACTS 2 : 4.

“And began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” •

Some interpreters, both ancient and modern, have fancied that the miracle was wrought, not upon the speakers, but upon the hearers, so that while the former spoke in their own language, the latter heard, each one the sounds of his own language. But this idea may be at once dismissed as inconsistent first with our Saviour's promise in Mark 16 : 17, “They shall speak with new tongues” (that is, with tongues *new to them*), and secondly, with its fulfillment as stated here,

"began to speak with other tongues" (that is, other than their own), "as the Spirit gave them utterance," and that, too, before the crowd of foreign hearers came together, attracted by the report of the wonderful phenomenon.

A more important question respects the character and object of the gift then bestowed. Was it a permanent knowledge of other languages, to be used in preaching the gospel in foreign lands, or a temporary inspiration, enabling those who received it to utter the praises of God in foreign languages, and intended, like other miracles, chiefly for making an immediate impression upon those who witnessed it?

It is perhaps impossible to give in our day a positive answer to this question. But that the latter is the true interpretation seems strongly probable when we consider:—

(1) That the gift of tongues was conferred on members of the church at Corinth when there were no foreign hearers present, so that Paul says (1 Cor. 14: 2), "No man understandeth," and (verse 17) "Thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified." The gift appears to have consisted in a rapturous exaltation of spirit and the ability to utter the praises of God in foreign languages.

It would seem that the exercise of this gift was committed to the discretion of the recipient of it, and therefore capable of being abused (verse 32), and so the apostle exhorts them to use it only when there is an interpreter at hand, or when the speakers are endowed with the gift of interpreting.

(2) That Paul, although he could say (1 Cor. 14: 18), "I speak with tongues more than all you," yet when at Lystra (Acts 14: 11-18) he, as well as Barnabas, appears not to have understood what the people said when they cried out in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men." And

(3) That some of the early fathers state that Titus accompanied Paul on some of his evangelistic journeys in the capacity of an interpreter.

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#### ACTS 7: 16.

"The sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor."

In Gen. 33: 19 we read that *Jacob*, on his return from Padan Aram, encamped before Shalem, a city of Shechem, and "bought a parcel of a field

where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of money." It is not said that he purchased it as a burying-place, but in Josh. 24: 32 we read that the bones of Joseph were buried in Shechem, "in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of silver."

Of Abraham we do not read that he purchased land in Shechem, but we do read (Gen. 12: 6, 7) of his coming there immediately after entering the land of Canaan, and of his building there an altar to Jehovah; and it is worthy of remark that in immediate connection with Jacob's purchasing the lot of ground near Shechem it is recorded (Gen. 33: 20) that he built an altar there, while nothing is there said of the purchased ground being intended for a burying-place. It was a natural thing for him to purchase the ground where he pitched his tent and built an altar for worship. And it would be equally natural for Abraham to purchase the land on which he pitched his tent and built his altar.

Some commentators have supposed, in order to account for the language here employed by Stephen, that Abraham originally purchased this

ground from the Canaanites, that it passed again into their hands after his departure, and that Jacob, knowing that it had been the place of his grandfather's tent and altar, repurchased it, and built his altar perhaps on the very spot where Abraham's altar had been. They add that the purchase being from "Hamor the father of Shechem" need cause no difficulty. *Hamor* may easily be supposed to have been the name of the original patriarch of the Shechemite clan. In Judges 9: 28 it seems to be so used, just as in 1 Chron. 2: 49-51 we read of the father of Gibeon, the father of Kirjath-jearim, the father of Bethlehem, etc., meaning the patriarchs of the clans dwelling in these places.

The knowledge of such a purchase by Abraham, though not recorded in Genesis, might have been preserved by tradition.

Some have thought that the insertion of the name of Abraham here must have been the mistake of some early copyist.<sup>1</sup> They reason that since it is stated in Acts 6: 5-10, that Stephen was "full of the Holy Spirit," and that his opponents "were not able to resist [or withstand] the

<sup>1</sup> This appears to have been Calvin's view, for he speaks of it as a "manifest mistake, which must be corrected."



wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake," it is not to be supposed that he would confound the purchase of the cave of Machpelah by Abraham with that of the parcel of ground at Shechem by Jacob. Such a mistake, could it be demonstrated, need not in the slightest degree disparage the doctrine of the inspiration of the writings of the New Testament. But aside from the question of inspiration in the case of Stephen as a speaker, it seems unlikely that he should have made such a mistake, or that he could have gone on without interruption in his speech if he had made any statement not in accordance with the commonly received tradition.

Any explanation, however, of the difficulty connected with this passage must be conjectural. There is no manuscript authority for any change in the text ; neither have we any proof that there existed in Stephen's day any tradition respecting the purchase by Abraham of the parcel of ground in Shechem.

The burial of Joseph in this ground is recorded, as mentioned above, in the last chapter of Joshua. That of his brethren is not recorded ; but Jerome (who resided in the fourth century very near the place) states that their tombs were seen there in his day.

## ACTS 9: 7.

“Hearing the voice, but seeing no man.”

Compare ch. 22: 9, “They heard not the voice of him that spake to me.”

There is not the slightest need of regarding these two statements as contradicting each other. The men heard a sound, but distinguished nothing of what was spoken to Paul. Luke’s statement is that they *heard*, literally. Paul’s statement in ch. 22 is equally legitimate though figurative, *they heard not*, that is, they understood not.

## ACTS 23: 5, 6.

“I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest.”

The majority of modern commentators interpret these words of Paul as implying either, —

(1) That, having been absent from Jerusalem for a considerable time, and knowing that frequent changes in the office took place, he was *actually ignorant* as to who was at present acknowledged as high priest, or

(2) That he *did not at the moment consider* that it was the high priest whom he rebuked.

The former appears to me an exceedingly improbable hypothesis in reference to a man of Paul's quick discernment and masterly familiarity with every thing pertaining to Jewish administration. Compare what he says to the Galatian Christians (Gal. 1 : 14) of his progress in *Judaism*, that is, in the whole economy of the Jewish system. Besides, even if he did not know who at the moment held the office of high priest, he could not fail to see that Ananias was presiding in the council, and so was a "ruler of the people" in the sense of the passage (Ex. 22 : 28) which he quoted.

The second interpretation requires us to give a forced and unnatural meaning to the words οὐκ ᾔδειν, *I did not know*.

Equally improbable seems to me the hypothesis of Canon Farrar, that Paul, owing to defective vision, did not notice who it was that gave the command to smite him on the mouth. All three of the above interpretations seem to me inconsistent with the bold and ringing denunciation in verse 3, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall!" a prediction fulfilled in the death of the high priest Ananias by the hand of an assassin, recorded by Josephus (*Jewish War*, ii, 17, 9).

I prefer, therefore (with Augustine, Calvin, J. A. Alexander, and others), to understand the words *I knew not*, etc., as spoken ironically, and as denying that Ananias had any claim to be regarded and treated as "God's high priest;" and this, whether on account of his not being the lawful successor to the office, but occupying it by the favor of heathen rulers, or on account of his violent abuse of his temporary authority in commanding that Paul should be smitten on the mouth.

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## VERSE 6.

"I am a Pharisee."

In what sense could Paul say this? Clearly not in any such sense as to deny his supreme devotion to Christ and his cause. There was no danger of Paul's being misunderstood on this point. He said it in the same sense as he had said the day before when addressing the multitude from the stairs of the fortress, "I am a Jew" (ch. 22: 3), or, as he said in commencing his address to the council (ch. 23: 1), "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." In other words, By accepting Jesus as the

Messiah I have not forfeited my standing as a Jew, nor renounced my firm faith in Moses and the prophets. *Loyalty to them* demands that I find in Jesus the true fulfillment of their prophetic words. And the crowning evidence that he is so is found in the fact that God has raised him from the dead. The men who are *disloyal* to the law and the prophets are these unbelieving Sadducees. It is they who are subverting our holy ancestral religion, and not I.

In ch. 4: 1, 2 we read that the Sadducees were in authority, and were active in persecuting the apostles because "they taught the people and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead;" and in ch. 5: 17 that the high priest himself was of that unbelieving sect.

Paul was now preaching, as Peter and John had before preached, Jesus and the resurrection; and so he appeals here to the Pharisees who were members of the council to stand by him on the great doctrine of the resurrection, which the Sadducees rejected. In like manner he appealed to king Agrippa (ch. 26: 8), saying, "Why should it be thought incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" and in verse 6 he says, "I stand and am judged for the hope of the

promise made unto our fathers ;” and again (ch. 28 : 20), he said to the Jews at Rome, “For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.”

In saying, “Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question” (chapters 23 : 6 ; 24 : 21 ; 26 : 7), he did not mean that this was the direct and formal charge against him, and there was no danger that any one of his hearers would so understand him. He simply meant to say that *virtually* he stood there as a prisoner because of his holding firmly to the truth of the promises made to the fathers (in which every consistent Pharisee must stand with him), and of his witnessing that God had fulfilled those promises in Christ (in which every Jew who believed in the Old Testament Scriptures ought logically to stand with him). He was therefore perfectly justifiable in appealing to the Pharisees to stand by him, seeing he could have no hope of a fair trial by the whole council under the leadership of Sadducees.

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ACTS 26 : 28.

“Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.”

This rendering has been controverted on the ground that Agrippa did not say *παρ’ ὀλίγον* (the

usual Greek phrase for *almost*), but ἐν ὀλίγῳ. The R. V. gives the very free rendering, "With but little persuasion thou wouldst fain make me a Christian." But there appears nothing in the Greek to justify the rendering *wouldst fain*. The verb is a simple present indicative, *thou persuadest*, but quite capable of being understood as a future, "In a little time [or, with a little effort] thou wilt persuade."

It is not necessary to go into the question of the reading adopted by the Revisers, "to make me a Christian," instead of "me to become a Christian," since the general sense is not altered.

But another remark seems to me pertinent here. What if Agrippa and Paul, familiar with the Hebrew מְעַדְּךָ, *within a little, almost* (Ps. 73 : 2 ; 119 : 87 ; Prov. 5 : 14), used ἐν ὀλίγῳ in the same sense, a little aside from ordinary Greek classical usage ?

On the whole I concur in Calvin's opinion that *almost persuadest* expresses the true meaning, and that there was nothing of sarcasm in the language of Agrippa, but simply an acknowledgment that there was some force in Paul's argument. This would well accord with the moderate tone of

Agrippa's remark addressed to Festus after leaving the audience chamber, that Paul might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Cæsar.

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ROMANS I : 16, 17.

"I am not ashamed of the gospel," etc.

This was only another mode of saying, *I glory* in that which so many Jews and Gentiles reject, despise, and persecute; "for it is the power of God." That is, this proclamation of salvation through faith is no setting forth of a speculative philosophical theory, but is attended with a divine power to transform and save men.

The "righteousness of God," in verse 17, manifestly signifies not God's personal character as a righteous being, but the righteousness which he confers upon those who accept his free gift, and it is called *his* righteousness because it is *his* mode of justifying sinners, and not a mode of man's contriving. All false systems of religion, however much they may differ in details, agree in this fundamental principle, that man must in some way *earn* or merit salvation and the favor of God. The gospel sets all human merit aside,



and proclaims a salvation which is of *free grace*, through *faith*. The believer accepts by faith God's offer of a free salvation, and thereupon *is accounted righteous*. This is "God's righteousness."

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ROMANS 5: 15, 17, 20.

"Much more."

These words, *much more*, can not be understood of the *degree* in which grace has reigned or abounded as compared with sin. The apostle is addressing those who knew and acknowledged the truth recorded in the Old Testament, that sin and death entered the world through the transgression of Adam. Yet the unbelieving Jews rejected and opposed the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ and on account of his perfect righteousness. Paul argued from premises which they admitted. It is as if he had said, You admit that through the transgression of *one*, namely, Adam, *many* became sinners and subject to death; *much more*, considering the goodness of God, ought you to believe and acknowledge that the gifts of righteousness and

eternal life may be conferred upon *many* through the righteousness, atonement, and mediation of *one*, namely, Jesus Christ.

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ROMANS 7: 14-25.

“I am carnal, sold under sin.”

This language is very strong, and has led many interpreters to understand the whole passage as relating to the experience of unconverted men. Such was Augustine's view as expressed in his earlier writings; but after much study of the passage he retracted this view, and strongly expressed his concurrence with the earlier fathers, “Hilary, Gregory, Ambrose, and others,” who understood the apostle as describing his own experience; that is, the experience of a converted but partially sanctified man, who struggles against the “sin that dwells within him.”

The best modern interpreters accord with this view. On verse 15, “What I would, that do I not,” Calvin says: “Do not understand that it was *always* the case with him that he could not do good; but what he complains of is only this: that he could not perform what he wished, so that

he did not pursue that which was good with the alacrity which was meet, because he was held in a manner bound . . . through the weakness of the flesh."

That this is the correct view is evident : —

(1) From Paul's saying in verse 15 that he does not do what he wishes. The unregenerate man in committing sin does what he wishes, although his conscience condemns him.

(2) From the parenthetical expression in verse 18, "that is, in my flesh." An unregenerate man would have no need to use this language.

(3) From the declarations in vs. 19-22 that he *wills* to do good, and that he *delights* in God's law after the inward man.

All these expressions go to show that we have in this passage a description of the struggle which goes on in the experience of a true believer, who *delights* in the law of God and *desires* to be wholly conformed to it, but still finds that sin *dwells within*, finds another law (or governing principle) warring against the law (or governing principle) of his mind, and bringing him into a state of captivity. In view of this terrible struggle in which his own strength was nothing but weakness, he cries out, Who shall deliver me from

the body of this death? "By the body of death," says Calvin, "he means the whole mass of sin." So in ch. 6: 6 Paul speaks of the old man being crucified, "that the *body of sin* might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

Though despairing of his own unaided efforts, yet he rejoices that there is deliverance, and breaks forth with the joyful expression of thanksgiving that that deliverance is given "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

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#### ROMANS 8: 19-23.

"The earnest expectation of the creature" (the creation), etc.

Many interpretations have been given to the word *τίσις* here used by the apostle. Dr. Hodge enumerates six, namely: —

(1) The whole rational and irrational creation, including angels and all things else, animate and inanimate;

(2) The whole world exclusive of angels, but inclusive of the irrational animals;

(3) The whole material creation in a popular sense, as we say, all nature;

- (4) The whole human race ;
- (5) The heathen world, as distinguished from believers ;
- (6) The body of believers.

Dr. Hodge gives his assent to the third of these interpretations, namely, the material creation, "all nature." Holy angels can not be included, for they are not subject to vanity. Men in general, or the heathen world, can not be intended, because it can not be said that they long for the manifestation of the sons of God. Neither can it be said of them that they were made subject to vanity without their own will, or voluntary action. Believers in general, as distinguished from the *first* believers, can not have been the meaning of the apostle here, because there is no essential difference between the state and feelings of the first believers and of believers in general.

We must therefore understand the apostle as speaking here in a popular and figurative manner of *all nature*, that is, of the lower orders of created beings, animate and inanimate, as groaning under the consequences of man's sin, *without having participated in it*. How the brute creation groans and suffers under cruelties inflicted by men ! Even inanimate creation groans. God said

to Adam, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake." Thorns, briars, and poisonous plants are part of the fruits of that curse. Storms, tempests, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions spread desolation around. All this results from the sin of *man*, and that by a supreme divine appointment (verse 20), without the lower creation's participating, or being capable of participating, in the sin. But this curse is not to last forever. Its consequences will all disappear when the new heavens and the new earth appear in which righteousness is to dwell. Therefore all nature may be said (figuratively indeed, but still truly and beautifully) to look forward with earnest longing for that glorious consummation.

The day of this deliverance from the bondage of corruption is called in verse 19 the time of the "manifestation of the sons of God," and in verse 23 as the time of the "*adoption*." The term *adoption* is here used with an allusion to those public formalities required by the Roman law by which alone an adopted child of a citizen could be recognized as himself a citizen and as having a right to inherit the property of his adopting father. At the second coming of Christ all the children of God, however unknown or despised

in this world, will be *manifested* and made partakers of the full glory of their heavenly inheritance.

It has pleased God, in his Word, to give us only *glimpses* of the glory of the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. But that a great change will come, not only over man, but over all nature, appears from such prophetic words as "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid." "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." "I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea."

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### ROMANS 9: 3.

"For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren."

The startling character of this language has led some to propose the rendering, "I did wish," etc., that is, when I was out of Christ, an opposer of Christianity. But this can not be admitted; for

1. Before his conversion he could not wish to be cut off from one with whom he had never been united.

2. But even supposing his wish to mean nothing more than that he should *remain* alienated from Christ, there appears no reason why he should speak of so remaining *on behalf of* his countrymen. To make it mean simply because of his attachment to them, is exceedingly tame and meaningless. While he and they were alike enemies of Christ, how could he speak of his wishing to remain so as being for the benefit of his nation?

3. A wish of this kind while in that state of hostility would be no expression of self-abnegation.

We are compelled therefore to understand these words of Paul as descriptive of his present feelings of earnest longing for the salvation of his countrymen and distress on account of their continued obduracy and impenitence. He goes on to describe the high privileges which they had enjoyed as God's people, which made their present impenitence and unbelief all the more distressing.

Paul knew that it was impossible for any thing



to separate him from Christ. He had just penned those words of overflowing assurance, that neither life nor death, nor any thing in heaven, earth, or hell could separate him from Christ's love. We must therefore understand him as saying, Such is my love for my people and my grief for their present hopeless condition that, *if it were possible*, I would be willing to take their place and bear their curse that they might be saved.

Still other interpretations of the apostle's language have been proposed. One of the most plausible is that adopted by Doddridge, who renders ἀπὸ τοῦ χριστοῦ *after the example of Christ*, appealing to the use of ἀπὸ in 2 Timothy 1: 3, "whom I serve *from* [that is, after the example of] my forefathers." But in that passage we may equally well understand him as meaning, "whom I serve in accordance with the traditions received *from* my forefathers," and so avoid attaching an unusual sense to the preposition.

On the whole the interpretation above given seems the most natural, and as such has been approved by the best commentators, ancient and modern.

## ROMANS 9: 13.

“Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”

These words are quoted from Mal. 1: 2, 3, where they were used by the prophet to set forth in a striking manner the *favor* with which God had treated Israel, as the people of his choice, in contrast with the *rejection* of Esau and his posterity. There is here no hatred in the ordinary sense of that term. The prophet alludes to God's dealings with Israel and with the descendants of Esau, in order to impress upon his countrymen the fact that they had been the recipients of *special divine favors*, which had not been conferred upon the descendants of Esau, Jacob's twin and elder brother. The strong language which he puts into the mouth of God respecting the dealings of his providence with the two nations, should be understood as if he had said, “Jacob I chose and Esau I rejected.”

The apostle uses the words for a similar purpose, and goes on immediately to declare that God's choice of one nation or individual to be the recipient of favors which he does not confer upon others implies no injustice toward those not so chosen.

When God selected Israel as a people whom he would place under special training, and to whom he would grant special revelations and instruction, it might seem as if he rejected and disregarded other nations. But this was only in appearance and by comparison with his favors bestowed upon Israel. We have no reason to imagine that there was any change in his providential dealings with other nations resulting from his choice of Israel, and those dealings were always consistent with infinite justice and faithfulness. Many passages of the Old Testament demonstrate this. Notice, in reference to this point, God's dealings with the Philistine king Abimelech (Gen. 20 : 3-7), his sending Jonah to Nineveh, etc. See also Deut. 32 : 8 ; Is. 18 : 3 ; 19 : 24 ; Ezek. 28 : 3 ; Amos. 9 : 7 ; also, many passages in the Psalms and in the prophets.

It is true that God confers favors upon one (individual or nation) which he does not confer upon others. This has been the case in every age. It is equally true that the reasons for his choice are not revealed to us. But let us beware of the folly of charging the Judge of all the earth with injustice toward those on whom he does not confer special favors.

## ROMANS 9: 18.

“Whom he will, he hardeneth.”

In what sense does God harden the heart of a wicked man? Respecting Pharaoh it is said (Ex. 10: 20), “The Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart.” But it is also said (Ex. 9: 34), “When Pharaoh saw . . . he sinned yet more and hardened his heart.”

Clearly the connection demands that we understand the phrase differently in the two cases. Pharaoh hardened his own heart by going on in sin. Did God harden it by compelling him to go on in sin? No; for the common-sense of mankind does not hold any one responsible for acts done under compulsion. We must then understand the Scriptures as teaching that God exercises in some way a supreme control over men, sometimes (without taking away their freedom of action) restraining them from evil and inciting them to virtue by the influence of his Spirit, and sometimes (for reasons not revealed) withholding that precious influence, and leaving bad men to go on in their chosen sinful ways and to bring destruction upon themselves. When the Lord in this way gives men up to go their own ways, he is said to destroy

them ; for example, Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli (1 Sam. 2 : 25). But in the other sense men are said with equal truth to destroy themselves (Hos. 13 : 9).

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## ROMANS 10 : 6.

“The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise.”

We need not understand Paul as affirming that in uttering the words which he quotes from Deut. 30 : 12-14, Moses had in view the gospel revelation of justification by faith. The words of Moses related to the revelation then given to Israel. The apostle simply takes those words and uses them as equally applicable to the gospel revelation of righteousness by faith. It is as if he had said, “I may say of the gospel as truly as Moses did of the law, that its teaching is not remote and obscure, but near and plain.”

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## ROMANS 11 : 32.

“God hath concluded [shut up] all in unbelief.”

It may be that the translators intended to say that God had *convicted* all of unbelief. If so,

they would be supported by the authority of Chrysostom. Compare Gal. 3 : 22. They may however have used the term *concluded* in its old and etymological sense of *shut up*. This accords much better with the course of thought as exhibited in vs. 30, 31. The Revised Version substitutes *disobedience* for unbelief, but the thought is the same. *Obeying the gospel* is the same as receiving or believing it, and not merely the resulting obedience to its precepts. Compare Rom. 6 : 17, *obeying the doctrine*, and 10 : 16, *obeying the gospel*, where a different but synonymous term is used. The apostle reminds the Gentiles of their former state of unbelief, from which they were rescued by occasion of the unbelief of the Jews, and then declares the gracious purpose of God, that through their conversion the Jews also should be brought in, that so he might have mercy upon *all*; that is, upon both Jews and Gentiles.

In what sense then did God *shut up* either Jews or Gentiles in unbelief? I answer, In the same sense in which it is written that he hardened Pharaoh's heart (see note on Rom. 9 : 18). He permitted both Jews and Gentiles to go on for a time in their own chosen way of sin and unbe-

lief, with the purpose of ultimately calling multitudes of both Jews and Gentiles by his grace to repentance, faith, and a holy life. This is the uniform teaching of the Scriptures. Both repentance and faith are gifts of God (Acts 11 : 18 ; Eph. 2 : 8). And yet even the heathen with the light which they possessed ought to have repented and believed in God. But "the times of this ignorance God overlooked." The gospel was a new and emphatic call to repentance and faith. When in the light of the future world the ways of God toward both the saved and the lost are made fully manifest, believers will joyfully acknowledge that their faith, repentance, and obedience were all of God's free and sovereign grace, and unbelievers will be compelled to admit that the punishment which has overtaken them is the due reward of their deeds and in accordance with supreme and absolutely perfect justice.

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I CORINTHIANS 3 : 15.

"But he himself shall be saved ; yet so as by fire." (Revised Version, *through fire*.)

The attempt of Romanists to draw from this

text an argument for their imagined *purgatory* is treated by Calvin with merited contempt. The term *fire* in this verse must of necessity have the same meaning as in verse 13, and its meaning there is plainly that which *tests*, not that which *purifies*. The fire will "try the work," burning up the combustible material. The strict judgment of God will reject the unworthy *work* of even sincere Christians. But those who build on the true foundation will be accepted, although the faulty part of their work is rejected. They escape *as through fire*; that is, as one who passes through fire and escapes, while his wood and hay and stubble are burned up.

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#### I CORINTHIANS 5 : 5.

"To deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

"Delivering to Satan" doubtless signifies cutting off from the fellowship of the Church. Compare I Tim. 1 : 20. For, as Augustine and Calvin (quoting him) well remark, "As Christ reigns *in* the Church, so Satan reigns *out of* the Church."



The point of difficulty in this passage lies in the question, What is meant by the destruction of the flesh? Many commentators, ancient and modern, interpret it of *bodily* inflictions supposed to result from being thus cut off, appealing to the case of Job, and to that of Elymas, whose blindness Paul predicted (Acts 13: 11). The case of Job proves that Satan is *sometimes* permitted to inflict bodily suffering; and that of Elymas, that God *sometimes* inflicts such suffering on those who set themselves to oppose his work (as well as on those who abuse their privileges, 1 Cor. 11: 30), but neither of these examples proves that Satan did or would inflict bodily suffering on those who were cut off from the Church. He would be more likely to let them alone, or to seek to lull them into security in sin. It seems, therefore, far better to understand the phrase "destruction of the flesh" as meaning the humbling of the offender's carnal pride and self-confidence. Thus his temporary humiliation might become a means of his eternal salvation.

## I CORINTHIANS 6: 2-4.

“The saints shall judge the world.” “We shall judge angels.” “Set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.”

In what sense shall the saints judge the world? The answers which commentators have given to this question are chiefly the following three:—

(1) Saints will judge the world by their own holy lives, as our Saviour said that the queen of the south would rise up in the judgment against the Jews who rejected him, and would condemn them (Matt. 12: 42).

(2) In the latter days the saints will have authority and rule the world, as Isaiah (49: 23) and Daniel (7: 18) predicted.

(3) In the last day of judgment saints, after being themselves acquitted, will be in some sense sharers of Christ's throne (Rev. 2: 26, 27; 3: 21), and will be joined with him in judging and condemning the wicked, including apostate angels.

The first and second do not suit the apostle's argument. A consistent Christian life does indeed condemn the wicked. But this does not prove that every consistent Christian is qualified to judge in matters pertaining to the present life.

Neither does the fact that temporal authority is in the latter days to be given to the Lord's people prove that the Corinthian Christians of Paul's day were fit to act as arbitrators in cases which might arise among their fellow-Christians. Besides, what is said of judging *angels* looks toward the judgment of the great day.

That the third is the correct answer is confirmed by the language of Jesus in Matt. 19: 28, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, ye also shall sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The comparison of that exalted position and office with the business of judging in the trifling affairs of this life is perfectly apposite and forcible.

Verse 4. "Set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church." Tischendorf and some other recent critics read this interrogatively, "Do ye set them to judge who are of no account in the Church?" and this reading is adopted by the Revised English Version. They refer the words, "those who are least esteemed [or, of no account] in the church" to the heathen judges. But how could the Church or its members be said to *set* such men as judges? Had Paul meant the heathen judges, he would rather have spoken of

*applying to them, or of carrying the case before them.* Besides, the phrase, "of no account in the church" is much more easily understood of members of the Church than of the heathen. Those who have adopted this reading have doubtless done so to get rid of the apparently strange advice of the apostle to choose the least esteemed of their brethren to act as judges. But we need not understand him as giving any such advice, but rather as saying, "Set your least esteemed brethren to judge *rather than go to law before the unbelievers.*" That he would have them choose the most competent men is evident from the words immediately following, "I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you," etc.

I am not aware of any ancient authority which can be alleged for this interrogative reading. The testimony of the Syriac Version alone ought to be accounted decisive against it. Its rendering is, "Set those in judgment for you who are least esteemed in the church." This is confirmed by the Vulgate, which has, "*Contemptibiles qui sunt in ecclesia, illos constituite ad judicandum.*" Both imply that the persons set to judge are *in* the church. And the Ethiopic takes away all doubt

by saying, "Let them listen to the least esteemed brethren in the church whom they have designated."

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I CORINTHIANS 7: 15.

"But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. The brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases."

The word rendered *depart* might be rendered *separate himself*. The principal question, however, which arises in reference to this passage is, What is meant by *not being under bondage*? Does it imply that the unoffending party is so released from the marriage bond as to be at liberty to contract another marriage? The general sentiment of the Church in all ages has answered this question in the affirmative.

Some modern commentators maintain that it should be answered in the negative, and explain the phrase *is not under bondage* as meaning, is not under obligation to provide for the support of the departing one, or to make further efforts to induce him or her to return. But would the inspired writer have designated any such obligation as a *bondage*?

It seems to me that the term rendered depart comprises in itself the idea of sundering the marriage bond, and thus of constituting a virtual divorce, or being virtually what our Saviour recognized as a just ground of divorce. The legislators of Christian countries have so understood the matter, and I think they are sustained by the words of the apostle in this passage. Of course a Christian so deserted must not presume to decide for himself, but must take the necessary steps to have a lawful decision of his case. I am aware that the Roman Catholics regard the Pope as the sole judge in such matters, and thus make legal divorce extremely difficult. On the other hand, in the Greek Church this authority belongs to every bishop, and thus divorce is easily obtained. Both these extremes are worthy of condemnation. So is the facility with which the civil courts sometimes grant divorces. But this should not debar a conscientious Christian from resorting to them for relief, if unhappily he has what the Scriptures regard as a just ground of divorce.

I CORINTHIANS 10: 2.

"And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

If *unto Moses* be accepted as a correct rendering here, we must understand the writer as saying that the whole people of Israel, by coming under the cloud and passing through the sea (verse 1), entered upon their journey through the wilderness pledged to follow and obey Moses as their divinely appointed leader. It is worthy of notice that the Syriac, the earliest version of the New Testament, instead of *unto Moses*, reads *by the hand of Moses*. It may be, however, that the translator did not attach any different meaning to the Greek preposition from the one given above, but simply used his own expression (by the hand of) in the sense of *under the hand*, or leadership, of Moses. The verb here used (were baptized) is in many ancient manuscripts a passive form, but the middle form, which is the reading of the common Greek text, is also preferred by most critical editors. If this be the true reading, it confirms the explanation given above, namely, that the people voluntarily pledged themselves to obey and follow Moses.

There appears nothing in this verse from which any argument can be drawn in reference to the mode of baptism. The Israelites were not baptized in either the cloud or the sea in any ordinary sense of the term. Through the sea they passed *on dry ground*. The cloud which was over them was not an ordinary rain-cloud, but a "pillar," looking in the daytime like a cloud of rising smoke, and in the night like a flame of fire. The time when it passed from its usual station before them and took a position between them and the pursuing Egyptians, was night, when, of course, to Israel it appeared as a pillar of fire, and whether it was seen to pass around or over the camp, it could in no sense be said to *baptize* the people. We are compelled, therefore, to regard the term as figuratively used here. By crossing the Red Sea, and so leaving Egypt, in obedience to the divine command, they renounced their former life of bondage to the Egyptians, and entered upon a new life as the Lord's freemen, pledging themselves to obey God, and Moses as the leader whom God had appointed for them. Viewed in this light, the whole transaction is strikingly analogous to making a profession of Christianity by baptism, and its introduction here



gives point to the exhortation addressed by Paul to his Corinthian brethren not to imitate the rebellions and backslidings of ancient Israel.

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I CORINTHIANS 10: 4.

"They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."

The rock from which God caused water to flow in Horeb for quenching the thirst of the Israelites is here called a *spiritual* rock because, like the manna called in verse 3 spiritual food, it was an emblem of spiritual blessings.

In what sense did the rock *follow* the Israelites? Some commentators insist that we must understand the apostle as saying that *Christ* (typified by the rock) *followed them*. But had this been his meaning, would he not rather have said, accompanied them, or led them? Just as it is said that they drank of the rock, meaning they drank of the water which flowed from the rock, so here we may understand that the stream of water which God caused to flow from that rock followed them in their course. Their encampment at Horeb was on very high ground, and

much of their course till they reached the sea-shore at Ezion-geber would be descending. Paul does not say that the stream followed them in *all* their wanderings in the wilderness. That it continued to flow for many days we may infer from Deut. 9 : 21. How long it flowed is not essential to the argument. Its course would naturally be toward the Red Sea, and the fiery, cloudy pillar probably led the people down the same ravines through which it flowed, so as to give them the benefit of this miraculous supply of water as long as it was necessary; that is, until they should reach a region where they could find a natural supply of water. Again in the last year of their wanderings they were in distress from the want of water, and again God interposed for their relief by a miraculous supply (Num. 20 : 8-11). Some commentators regard this repetition of the miracle of causing water to flow from a rock, as that to which the apostle alludes when he speaks of the rock as *following* the people; but the explanation given above seems to me far more natural.

In saying that *the rock was Christ*, the apostle uses language quite in accordance with that of our Saviour when he said to the Jews, "Moses

gave you not the bread from heaven ; . . . I am the bread of life" (John 6 : 32, 35). The miraculous supply of food and drink in the desert was intended as an emblem of the bread and water of life.

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I CORINTHIANS II : 10.

"For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels."

Dr. Hodge remarks that "there is scarcely a passage in the New Testament which has so much taxed the learning and ingenuity of commentators as this," but that "after all that has been written it remains just as obscure as ever." There is, however, a substantial agreement among the best interpreters. Dr. Hodge adds, "The meaning which it naturally suggests to the most superficial reader is regarded by the most laborious critics as the only true one."

This "naturally suggested meaning" is simply this. Woman, in modest recognition of her divinely appointed subordinate position, should in the Christian assemblies appear with a veil or covering for the head (as a token of her being under *ἐξουσία*, *authority*), and that not merely

because her deportment would be observed by men, but also by the holy angels, who in various passages of Scripture are spoken of as deeply interested in the affairs of the Church on earth, and as rejoicing greatly when sinners repent and turn to God. See Luke 2 : 10-14 ; 15 : 7 ; 1 Cor. 4 : 9 ; Heb. 1 : 14 ; 1 Pet. 1 : 12.

This is far better than to understand *angels* here as meaning the pastors of the churches, as in Revelation, chapters 1, 2, 3,—a meaning nowhere attached to this word without a qualifying term, and unsuitable to the present passage as being in the plural number and with the definite article. Still less suitable is the meaning assigned to the word *angels* in this passage by some commentators, namely, *emissaries*, *spies*, sent by enemies to observe and report any improprieties in the Christian assemblies.

# I CORINTHIANS 14 : 2-19.

## Speaking with Tongues.

See note on Acts 2 : 4.

I CORINTHIANS 15 : 24, 28.

"When he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." "Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him."

This representation harmonizes with that which our Saviour made to his disciples when he was about to leave them. "All power," said he, "*is given unto me* in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28 : 18). Also with the words of the apostle in Eph. 1 : 20-22 and elsewhere. The Father accepts the finished work of the Son, raises him from the dead, seats him at his own right hand, and constitutes him "head over all things to the church."

Compare also Rev. 1 : 1, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which *God gave unto him*," etc.

The kingdom here spoken of is Christ's kingdom *as Mediator*, as Head over all things to the Church. And it is here represented as lasting as long as his mediatorial work lasts, and as being given up when that work is finished. Perhaps when that consummation is reached the mystery of the Godhead may be more fully revealed than it has been to us in this world. Meantime the *surrendering* of the mediatorial kingdom to the

Father no more conflicts with the supreme divinity of the Son than does his humiliation and incarnation. He humbled himself to perform a specific work on earth. When that work on earth was finished, he was "exalted to be a prince and a Saviour," to perform in heaven another part of his priestly and mediatorial work, namely, that of interceding for his people. This and his kingly governing of all things for his Church must continue until their struggles are over and all the powers of evil are subdued. We can conceive of his then surrendering to the Father the delegated authority which he received for this special mediatorial work. Precisely what is meant by the Son's being then *subject* to the Father, we may not be able to decide, but it can not be inconsistent with his supreme divinity and oneness with the Father, any more than was his assumption of human nature and his submitting his own will to that of his Father when on earth. The facts we receive on the testimony of the divine Word. For the explanation of them we must wait.

I CORINTHIANS 15 : 29.

"What shall they do who are baptized for the dead?"

On this difficult text one can do little more than to mention the principal interpretations which have been proposed, no one of which can be regarded as entirely satisfactory.

The first which presents itself is that it refers to a custom of baptizing a living person on behalf of a catechumen who had died unbaptized. Ancient writers inform us that such a practice existed among certain heretics in the second century. This interpretation has the advantage of explaining every term used in the text in its normal and most natural signification. But there is no proof that any such usage had already sprung up at Corinth. Besides, as Calvin well remarks, it is difficult to suppose that Paul, who so strongly rebuked other abuses which *had* sprung up there, would have failed to rebuke this superstitious abuse of the ordinance of baptism if it had existed there, or would have based any argument for the resurrection upon the existence of such a custom. It is quite possible that this corrupt

practice may have originated in a misinterpretation of these words of the apostle.<sup>1</sup>

Another interpretation which retains the normal signification of *baptism* and of *the dead*, and only proposes a change in the use of the preposition *for*, is that the apostle refers to those who had been led, by witnessing the heroic constancy of the martyrs, to believe in Christ and to confess him by being baptized, thus, like new recruits, *taking the place* of those who had fallen, and exposing themselves to the same persecutions, even unto death. This would harmonize with what the apostle goes on to say of his own sufferings and exposures for the cause of Christ, and is perhaps open to fewer objections than any other interpretation.

The other explanations all demand a variation from the ordinary meaning of one or more of the terms here employed, and all seem to me inadmissible. Such are :—

(1) Baptized under the apprehension of approaching death. This was Calvin's view, and he appeals to a use of the preposition *for*, making it equivalent to *as if*: baptized *for dead*, that is,

<sup>1</sup> It is worthy of remark here that one of the grossest heresies of modern times, Mormonism, has revived the superstitious custom of baptizing for the dead.



when death was manifestly near. He suggests also the interpretation, baptized in so near a prospect of death that the only advantage they could hope to derive from their baptism would be after they were dead. The obvious objections to this view are that it involves putting upon *ὅπερ* a meaning foreign to its normal use, and entirely fails to account for the use of the definite article in the expression *the dead*.

(2) Baptized for one dead, namely, for Christ, regarding the plural form as used loosely instead of a singular ; obviously a forced and inadmissible interpretation.

(3) Baptized with suffering, as the Saviour said (Luke 12 : 50), "I have a baptism to be baptized with." But this offers no natural explanation of the accompanying words, *for the dead*.

(4) Baptized in hope of the resurrection of the dead. This, as well as the two preceding interpretations, relates generally to all believers. But the apostle seems to be speaking, not of all believers, but of a particular class. Here again we find no satisfactory explanation of the words, *for the dead*.

(5) Baptized *over* the dead. But this is contrary to the New Testament use of *ὅπερ* with a genitive.

Still other interpretations have been suggested (some supposing that there is an allusion to the *washing* of dead bodies), but none that are not encumbered with still greater difficulties than those mentioned above.

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## 2 CORINTHIANS 2: 14-16.

"Causeth us to triumph." Revised Version,  
 "Leadeth us in triumph."

In the only passage in the New Testament besides this where *ὑπαιβεῖν* occurs, namely, Col. 2: 15, both the Authorized Version and the Revised Version render it *triumphing over*. This is in accordance with the classical use of the word. If the revisers regarded it as conforming here to the same usage, we must understand their rendering as equivalent to "leadeth us [as captives] in [his own] triumph." Since, however, this thought does not accord with the context, they seem to have adopted this rendering as capable of meaning, "leadeth us [as sharers with him] in his triumph." If so, the meaning is essentially the same with that of the Authorized Version, "causeth us to triumph." That the word might easily have

been employed in this sense is apparent from the fact that verbs terminating in εὔω are frequently used both transitively and intransitively. Thus μαθητεύω is both to *be* a disciple and to *make* a disciple, βασιλεύω to *reign* and to *make* a king, εἰρηνεύω to *make* peace and to *live* in peace, ἀληθεύω to *be* and to *make* true, also to *verify*. Robinson quotes Plutarch as using θριαμβεύω in the sense of *causing to triumph*.

Verse 15. "We are a sweet savour." Our ministry is an acceptable offering to God (compare Eph. 5 : 2 ; Phil. 4 : 18) whether those who hear us accept the message and are saved, or reject it and perish.

Verse 16. The commentators tell us that fragrant odors accompanied every triumphal procession, and that at the close of the pageant some of the captives were put to death and the lives of others were spared. To the former the smell of the incense would be a stifling premonition of their fate, to the latter a fragrant intimation that they were to live. Whether we accept this allusion to Roman usages or not, there can be no doubt that in introducing in verse 15 the phrase, "a sweet savour unto God," the apostle's primary reference was to the Jewish sacrifices, so often

spoken of in the Old Testament as a sweet savor, that is, acceptable to God.

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2 CORINTHIANS 3 : 13.

“And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished” (*or*, which was to be done away).

Of course there is no need of understanding the apostle to mean that the putting a vail over Moses' face *literally* hindered the people from understanding the import of the institutions which he was commissioned to establish among them, but simply that he takes the literal fact, that they could not look steadfastly at the glory which shone in his face, as a fit emblem of their failure to understand the spiritual design and meaning of the law.

The passage derives additional illustration from the expression in verse 18 of this chapter, “with unvaild face beholding the glory of the Lord,” and in ch. 4 : 3, “if our gospel is vailed, it is vailed to those that perish.”

2 CORINTHIANS 6: 16-18.

"I will dwell in them and walk in them," etc.

The words, "I will dwell in them," etc., quoted in verse 16, are found in Lev. 26: 12, and nearly the whole of verse 17 in Is. 52: 11. The last clause of verse 17 and the whole of verse 18 appear not to be quoted directly from the Old Testament, but rather to be an expansion of the promise in verse 16. Compare Jer. 31: 1, "I will be the God of all the families of Israel," and Deut. 32: 19 and Is. 43: 6, where God calls the people of Israel *his sons and his daughters*.

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2 CORINTHIANS 12: 2.

"The third heaven."

Doubtless *the highest heaven*, synonymous with *paradise* in verse 4, the first or lowest heaven being the atmosphere (birds of the air being called also fowls of *heaven*); the second, the starry firmament, in which sense it is said, "The *heavens* declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth the work of his hands." The third or highest heaven remains, to be conceived of as the

place of the throne of God, or of the special manifestation of his glory, and the abode of holy beings.

Any explanation of this passage by a reference to the Rabbinical fancy of seven heavens (the third of which they reckoned the starry heaven) is inapposite, because in accordance with that view the *third heaven* of verse 2 would not be synonymous (as it manifestly is) with the *paradise* of verse 4. Besides, there is no evidence that that fancy is as old as the days of the apostle.

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## 2 CORINTHIANS 12 : 5.

“Of such an one will I glory : yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.”

From verse 7 it seems evident that Paul himself was the “man in Christ,” who fourteen years before had been caught up into paradise. How then does he here contrast himself with that favored person? Calvin suggests that he spoke in this *hesitating* way to show that he would have preferred to keep silence, but was compelled to speak by the violence of his opposers. Perhaps we get the best clew to the mode of speech which

he here adopts by understanding him to say that such exalted revelations were indeed worthy to be *gloried in* as special and gratuitous divine favors, but that he would not glory *in himself* as possessing any merit or desert of such favors. In respect to himself, he would glory only in those infirmities which caused the power of Christ to rest on him (v. 9). In other words he would glory only in the Lord.

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2 CORINTHIANS 12 : 7.

"A thorn in the flesh."

See note on Gal. 4 : 12-15.

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GALATIANS 3 : 16.

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many ; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

Some professed commentators on the Scriptures have found fault with Paul's reasoning here, and even made sport of it, as if he had sought to

prove from the use of the singular noun *seed*, instead of the plural *seeds*, that the promise related to an individual. But this representation is as absurd and superficial as it is irreverent. For, —

1. The apostle knew, as well as his learned critics, that *seed* was a collective noun, and we find him so using it constantly in his epistles. In Rom. 4: 18, speaking of the promise given to Abraham that he should be the father of many nations, the apostle adds, “according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be,” quoting the words of God to Abraham recorded in Gen. 15: 5, where we are informed that the Lord took Abraham out under the open sky, and said, Look now toward heaven and count the stars, if thou canst count them; So shall thy seed be. In like manner Paul speaks of Christ as being *of the seed* of David (Rom. 1: 3); of the promise as being made sure to all the *seed*, not to Jews only, but to all believers (Rom. 4: 16), and in this very chapter (v. 29) he says to the Galatians, “If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s *seed*, and heirs according to the promise.”

2. This being so, and the present passage *the only one in his writings* in which he uses the plural *seeds*, common candor (to say nothing of



the evidence that he was divinely inspired) requires that we should seek some other explanation, rather than charge him with quibbling or with ignorance of both Hebrew and Greek idiom.

3. In Gen. 21: 13 we read that God said to Abraham, "And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed." The Ishmaelites were Abraham's seed. So were the Arabian tribes descended from Keturah. So were the Edomites. But the promises respecting the Messiah were not given to these nations. Israel was the favored, chosen *seed*. Thus we can see how a writer in Hebrew or Greek might without solecism speak of the various *posterities* or *seeds* of Abraham.

4. "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Gen. 21: 12; Heb. 11: 18). This meant, and was understood by Abraham to mean, that the blessings of the covenant centered in Isaac and that, so far as these blessings were concerned, the other branches of his posterity would not be *called* or counted his *seed*.

5. When in the last clause of this verse the apostle says, "which is Christ," it is not necessary to regard him as *arguing* from the use of the singular number that the promised seed must

be an individual. His own consistent use of the same word elsewhere as a collective noun forbids this view. It is sufficient to understand him here as *affirming*, on his own inspired authority, that *the seed of Abraham in which all nations were to be blessed* was not the whole posterity of Abraham, nor even the people of Israel as a nation, but the individual Messiah.

6. In view of the above considerations we are prepared to understand the apostle in saying, He saith not, And to seeds, as of many, but, And to thy seed, as meaning simply that God, in giving these promises to Abraham's *seed*, did not design to give them to all the branches of his posterity, but to one ; and then he himself goes on to affirm that they culminated in one person, namely, the Messiah.

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GALATIANS 3 : 19, 20.

“Wherefore then serveth the law ?” etc.

The apostle, having shown that the covenant made with Abraham was a covenant of free grace, which could not be annulled by the law given four hundred and thirty years later, goes on to inquire, Wherefore then serveth the law ?

As Calvin well remarks, he is not here inquiring into all the uses of the law, but points that only which bears upon his present subject. It is as if he had said, God had proclaimed to Abraham a gospel. That gospel of free grace, which Abraham received by faith, God did not design by his law (proclaimed on Mount Sinai four hundred and thirty years later) to abrogate. What then *was* the design of the law so far as this gospel of free grace was concerned? It was to show men their transgressions and lead them to feel their need of a Saviour; or, as he says in verse 24, "The law was our tutor, to bring us unto Christ." Thus the law is not contrary to the promise, but auxiliary to it. The thought is the same as when he said to the Romans (Rom. 5: 20), The law entered that the offence might abound; but this was in order that grace might more abound. As he says also in this epistle (Gal. 2: 19), "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God;" that is, The law itself has taught me that by it I can not be justified and obtain eternal life.

"And it was ordained [disposed, or set forth] through [the ministry of] angels." So Stephen (Acts 7: 53) reminded the Jews that they had

received the law by disposals, or ministrations of angels, doubtless alluding to the extraordinary phenomena accompanying the giving of the law, and produced by the ministration of multitudes of attending angels. The presence of myriads of holy beings on occasion of the giving of the law is referred to in Deut. 33: 2. "The Lord came from Sinai, . . . and he came with ten thousands of saints [R. V., holy ones]: from his right hand went a fiery law for them."

"In the hands of a mediator." Many of the fathers understood this of Christ. But it is better to take it as referring to Moses, whom the Lord employed as a mediator between himself and the people, according to what Moses writes in Deut. 5: 5, "I stood between the Lord and you," and this in compliance with an earnest request of the people (vs. 23-27).

"Now a mediator is not a mediator of one." That is, the designation of some one to act as *mediator* implies the existence of a *covenant* between two parties. God, as the one sovereign of the universe, might have given his commands absolutely and unaccompanied by promises; but he was graciously pleased to put even the *fiery law* of Mount Sinai in the shape of a *covenant*

between himself and his people, binding himself to be their Guide and Protector, as they on their part bound themselves to follow his guidance and to keep his precepts.

This seems to be the simple meaning of this passage, of which the commentators tell us no less than two hundred and fifty different explanations have been proposed.

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GALATIANS 4 : 12-15.

Verse 12. "Be as I am ; for I am as ye are ; ye have not injured me at all."

Various turns have been given by interpreters to these words of Paul. To me the most natural seems to be to make them a plea for sympathy with the apostle, such as he had shown towards the Galatian converts. Many of them were now disposed to turn away from him and listen to Judaizing teachers. He reminds them of the earnestness with which he had labored for their spiritual good, and of the zeal which they had formerly manifested for the truth which he preached among them and for him as their spiritual father ; and assures them that his present

feeling is not one of resentment for any personal injury, but simply anxiety for their good.

Verses 13-15. Many conjectures have been offered in regard to the *infirmity* of which the apostle here speaks, which was doubtless the same mentioned in 2 Cor. 12: 7 under the name of a thorn in the flesh. The most probable seems to be that it was ophthalmia, an acute inflammation of the eyes, which is at the same time distressingly painful, quite like the pricking of thorns and briars in the flesh, and also would mar the appearance of a public speaker (2 Cor. 10: 10). This conjecture is rendered the more probable by what he says in verse 15 of the Galatians in their early zeal for him having been willing, had it been possible, to pluck out their own eyes and give them to him.

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#### GALATIANS 4: 24.

“Which things are an allegory.”

Better, with the Revised Version, “contain an allegory” (*ἀλληγορούμενα*); that is, may be used allegorically to illustrate the two schemes of salvation by the deeds of the law, and salvation by free

grace. That Paul did not regard the whole narrative as a mere allegory hardly needs to be remarked. It is manifest that he regarded it as historical truth from his mode of introducing the facts referred to in verses 22, 23, 28, and 29; also, from his employing here not the term ἀλληγορία, *allegory*, but ἀλληγορούμενα, *employed* or *interpreted as an allegory*.

Verse 25. "For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia." The translators employed the demonstrative *this* to represent the article in the original. But that article is the *neuter* article τό, and so directs attention, not to the person Hagar (which would have required the feminine ἡ), but to the meaning of *the name Hagar*. Now Hagar in Arabic signifies *a rock*, and Chrysostom and other ancient commentators remark that Mount Sinai was sometimes so called. It is therefore here as if the apostle had said, The Rock is Mount Sinai. *In Arabia*. Not in Canaan, the land of promise, but in Arabia, which was the residence of the descendants of Hagar, and therefore all the more suitable to be employed as an emblem of a servile condition.

## GALATIANS 5 : 12.

“I would they were even cut off which trouble you.”

Better, with the Revised Version, “that they who unsettle you would even cut themselves off.” There is an allusion to the *cutting off* of the foreskin in circumcision. But the verb is not passive, but middle, and therefore should be rendered, *would cut themselves off*. It is as if the apostle had said, Would that these people who are so zealous for circumcision, and are disturbing and unsettling you about the cutting off of foreskins, would cut themselves wholly off from your society, would withdraw and leave you in peace. The interpretation, “would mutilate themselves,” adopted by some distinguished commentators and lexicographers, appears to me utterly inapt and unworthy of the apostle, and I regret that it should appear even in the margin of the Revised Version.

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## EPHESIANS 1 : 1.

“To the saints who are at Ephesus.”

The Revised Version has a marginal note stating that “some very ancient authorities omit *at*



*Ephesus.*" This omission, together with the fact that the great majority both of Greek manuscripts and of ancient versions retain these words, renders extremely probable the view now generally accepted by commentators, that this epistle was a kind of circular intended for the churches at Ephesus, Laodicea, and other places through which the bearers would pass between those two cities. We know that it was sent by the same persons who took the epistles to the Colossian church and to Philemon who resided at Colosse. See Eph. 6: 21; Col. 4: 7, 9, 16, and Philemon 2. It is manifest also from internal evidence that it was written almost simultaneously with that to the Colossians, and while the thoughts expressed in the latter were fresh in the writer's mind. Compare Eph. 1: 1, 2 with Col. 1: 1, 2; Eph. 1: 7 with Col. 1: 14; Eph. 1: 15, 16 with Col. 1: 3, 4; Eph. 1: 21-23 with Col. 1: 18; Eph. 2: 1, 5 with Col. 2: 13; Eph. 2: 12, 13 with Col. 1: 21, 22; Eph. 2: 15 with Col. 2: 14; Eph. 3: 7-9 with Col. 1: 25-27; Eph. 4: 15, 16 with Col. 2: 19; Eph. 4: 32 with Col. 3: 13; Eph. 5: 15, 16 with Col. 4: 5; Eph. 5: 19 with Col. 3: 16; Eph. 5: 22 with Col. 3: 18; Eph. 5: 25 with Col. 3: 19; Eph. 6: 1-9 with Col. 3: 20-25, 4:

1; Eph 6: 18-20 with Col. 4: 2-4; Eph. 6: 21, 22 with Col. 4: 7, 8.

Ephesus was the port where a traveler going from Rome to Colosse would naturally land. Between Ephesus and Colosse were Magnesia on the Meander, Tralles, Laodicea, Hierapolis, and other cities in which churches may have existed, to which the apostle would desire to send copies of the epistle. One copy would be addressed to the believers in Ephesus, one to those in Laodicea (referred to in Col. 4: 16), and other copies may have been prepared without any local address to be left with churches on the way, according to circumstances. Ephesus being the largest and most important of all these cities, it was natural that more copies should be taken from the one left there than from any other. This would account for the majority of ancient manuscripts having the words, "in Ephesus," and for others not having them.

There seem to have been special reasons for the apostle's writing a separate letter to the church in Colosse, perhaps owing to particular information respecting its state, derived from Epaphras (Col. 1: 7; 4: 12; Philemon 23). So, as Colosse was not more than eight or ten miles

from Laodicea, it was easy and natural that the two epistles should be exchanged and read in both churches.

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EPHESIANS 5 : 14.

"Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

This passage has the appearance of being a quotation. Compare Acts 13 : 35, 2 Cor. 6 : 2, Eph. 4 : 8, Heb. 5 : 6, where quotations are introduced in the same manner, with simply the word λέγει. But no such passage is found in the Old Testament. Calvin suggests that there might be an allusion to Is. 60 : 1, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." To this Barnes objects that the address in Isaiah is to the church, whereas here it is to sinners, and prefers to regard the passage as not being a quotation, but simply as expressing in the apostle's own language God's call to sinners to awake from the death-like sleep of sin, with the promise that Christ will give them light. More probable seems to me the conjecture of Storr, Michaelis, and others that

it is a quotation from a Christian hymn already in use in the apostle's day. Its measured structure,

“Awake, thou that sleepest,  
And arise from the dead,  
And Christ shall give thee light,”

corresponds with that of the earliest Christian hymns which have come down to our time. They were doubtless composed in imitation of the parallelism of the Psalms. Thus the hymn by Clement of Alexandria, addressed to the Saviour, commences :—

“Mouth of babes who can not speak,  
Wing of nestlings that can not fly,  
Sure Guide of babes,  
Shepherd of royal sheep.”

The “*Te Deum laudamus*” begins :—

“We praise thee, O God,  
We acknowledge thee to be the Lord;  
All the earth doth worship thee,  
The Father everlasting ;”

and the “*Gloria in excelsis*,” which is probably older than either of them, begins with a quotation from Luke 2 : 14 :—

“Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace,  
Good will towards men.”

PHILIPPIANS 2 : 6.

"Thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

The Revised Version renders this clause, "counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God."

The principal considerations urged by those who favor the latter rendering are two, namely, (1) That counting it no robbery (no unjustifiable assumption) to be on an equality with God, would not be an example of humility, but rather of the contrary; and (2) That the conjunction *ἀλλά* requires that the verb which follows it should be adversative to the one which precedes it. In reference to the first, it may be replied that there is no need to consider the setting forth of the Saviour's humility as commencing with what precedes the conjunction, but that the whole of verse 6 may well be understood as a description of his original divine and glorious state. In regard to the second, we may refer to passages where *ἀλλά* is not strictly adversative, but may fairly be rendered by *nevertheless* or *and yet*. For example, in Mark 14 : 36 we read that Jesus prayed, "Remove this cup from me; *nevertheless*,

not what I will, but what thou wilt." So here we may understand the apostle as saying, "Christ, being in his original glory, counted it no unjustifiable assumption to be on an equality with the Father; *and yet* emptied himself of this glory, and became poor and despised for our sakes."

The following considerations favor the old rendering:—

(1) The utmost latitude of meaning which can be claimed for ἀρπαγμός would call it a *prize* only in the sense of something to be *seized* or *grasped at*. Ἀρπάζω is to *seize* or *snatch*, especially as a bird or beast of prey, and ἄρπαξ a *ravenous bird* or *beast*, or metaphorically a *rapacious man*. The idea of *clinging* or *holding fast* to something in one's possession does not inhere in these terms. How can we conceive of our Saviour's having contemplated, in his original glory, his equality with the Father as a thing to be *grasped at*, seeing it was already in his possession?

(2) The most ancient versions accord with the common English Version. The Peshito Syriac is rendered by Dr. Murdock, "Who, as he was in the likeness of God, deemed it no trespass to be the coequal of God; yet divested himself, and assumed the likeness of a servant," etc. To this

agree the Latin and other ancient versions ; also Tertullian. Some later fathers take the other view. Modern commentators too are divided. Calvin interprets the passage just as does the common English Version.

Some allege as an objection to this interpretation that *to be* on an equality with God can not be viewed as an *act*, and therefore can not be conceived of as worthy or not worthy to be called robbery. Here it should be noted that the apostle does not use an adjective, ἰσον, which would have expressed strictly the equality of the Son with the Father, but an adverbial form, ἰσα which may well be expressed by *on an equality* ; and so the passage may be paraphrased, "counted it not an unjust assumption to occupy a position of equality." On the whole this interpretation seems to me open to fewer objections than the one adopted by the Revised Version.

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PHILIPPIANS 2 : 17.

"Yea, and if I be offered [though I am poured out as a libation] upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all."

To get the full force of these words, we must bear in mind that according to the Jewish ritual every burnt offering must be accompanied by a libation as well as by an offering of bread or flour. The apostle compares the faith of the Philippian Christians to a sacrifice offered to God. As in Rom. 15 : 16, so here, he represents himself as the officiating minister offering the Gentile converts (or their faith) as an acceptable sacrifice to God ; and adds that if, in order that this sacrifice might be offered to God and accepted by him, it did become necessary that his own life-blood should be poured out, yet would he count it only as a libation accompanying that sacrifice ; in other words, so great was his joy at the conversion and salvation of his Philippian brethren that he would gladly give his own life to secure it. His use here of the present tense, "I am poured out as a libation," indicates, not merely the anticipated end of his course, but his daily experience, and corresponds with what he wrote to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 15 : 31), "I die daily."



PHILIPPIANS 3 : II.

“If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.”

Most of the commentators make the *resurrection from the dead* in this verse to signify exclusively the glorious future resurrection of the saints. Others understand it of the moral resurrection of believers to a holy life. I see no reason why we should not assign to these words a meaning which would comprise both. Paul says of himself, “I am crucified with Christ” (Gal. 2 : 20). By this he, of course, does not mean any literal crucifixion, or literal death, or exposure to death. He means that, as Christ died to put away sin, the believer also dies *unto sin*, putting away his former sinful life and rising to a new life of holiness. So to the Colossians he says (Col. 3 : 1), “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.” In like manner to the Romans (Rom. 6 : 4), “We are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up . . . even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

So here the apostle sets forth his renunciation of his former self-righteous life, and declares that

his grand aim and desire now is *to win Christ and be found in him* (vs. 8, 9), and he seems to be amplifying the same thought in verse 10 when he says, "that I may know him and the power of his resurrection," etc. In this view, knowing the power of Christ's resurrection will signify, experiencing in my own soul resurrection to a life conformed to that of Jesus.

But this rising with Christ, being found in Christ, living in Christ and Christ living in the believer, comprises the idea and insures the result of being glorified with him at his second coming. And that the apostle, speaking in verse 11 of *attaining to the resurrection from the dead*, meant to designate this whole change, this *winning Christ, being found in him, living in him, and eternal glory and blessedness with him*, is rendered highly probable by what he proceeds to say in verse 12, "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect," etc., and in verse 13, "Brethren, I count not myself yet to have apprehended." If in verse 11 he had referred *only* to the future glorious resurrection at Christ's second coming, would he have gone directly on to say what is contained in verses 12-14? It seems to me that he would not. Still, I would not *exclude*

the idea of eternal glory and blessedness, but would regard that idea as comprised in *winning Christ and being found in him*. Paul had indeed won Christ and was found in him. He had apprehended [laid hold of] Christ, or rather, as he himself says, had been laid hold of by Christ. He was living in Christ and Christ in him, and yet he longed for more perfect conformity to Christ, and therefore in one sense could say that he had not yet got hold of him, but was pressing forward and striving to do so.

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PHILIPPIANS 3 : 20.

"Our conversation [Revised Version, citizenship] is in heaven."

Here again I would not regard the question as being whether *πολίτευμα* signifies conversation (that is, conduct, course of life) exclusively, or citizenship exclusively. I think it comprises both. Starting from the idea of *πόλις*, *a city*, and *πολίτης*, *a citizen*, *πολίτευμα* signifies primarily the *administration* of the state, and secondarily the *relation of a citizen* to the state, comprising his rights, his obligations, and his deportment as a member

of the body politic. This view brings it into entire harmony with *πολιτεία*, which signifies the *state* itself, as in Eph. 2 : 12, "the commonwealth of Israel," and the privilege of *citizenship*, as in Acts 22 : 28, and also with the verb *πολιτεύομαι*, which, starting from the idea of *being* a citizen, goes on to that of *living as* a citizen, as in Acts 23 : 1 and Phil. 1 : 27. I understand the apostle therefore in this text as meaning to say, We are citizens of heaven, and are striving to conduct ourselves as such.

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#### COLOSSIANS 1 : 15.

"The firstborn of every creature." Better, with the Revised Version, "of the whole creation."

Had we no other statement in the Scriptures respecting the person of Christ than this, we might understand it (with the Arians) as meaning that Christ was the first of created beings. But having abundant and unambiguous testimony to his supreme divinity and oneness with the Father, we must regard the apostle as here designating his relation to the Father as *his firstborn*, and

therefore *heir and sovereign Lord* of the whole creation, or, as he is called in Heb. 1 : 2, "Heir of all things." With this interpretation the words immediately following harmonize. "For by<sup>1</sup> him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, . . . and he is before all things, and by him [not "in him," Revised Version] all things consist," that is, stand or are held together.<sup>2</sup>

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COLOSSIANS 1 : 19.

"For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell."

The reader of the English Bible may wonder at the insertion of the words *the Father*, since they are not found in the original Greek. Grammatically πλήρωμα might be taken as the subject of the verb, and so we might translate, with Bishop Ellicott, "In him it pleased the whole fulness

<sup>1</sup> Not *in him* (as in the Revised Version) but *by him*, as in ἐν δακτύλῳ θεοῦ, *by the finger of God* (Luke 11 : 20), ἐν τοῖς προφήταις, *by the prophets*, ἐν υἱῷ, *by his Son*, Heb. 1 : 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Consist* is an archaism (unfortunately retained in the Revised Version), and is certainly liable to be misunderstood. I would prefer, "By him are all things maintained," with a marginal note, Greek, *held together*.

(of the Godhead) to dwell." Others make *Christ* the subject, but this throws the rendering of verse 20 into confusion, to escape from which Conybeare and Howson propose changes in the text not sustained by the best authorities, ancient or modern.

The most natural rendering of verse 20 demands that the subject, which is obviously the same in verses 19 and 20, should be *God*, or *the Father*, understood. And so easy is the reference of *εὐδοξία* to God, that it is used without a possessive noun or pronoun following, as in Phil. 2: 13, where "the good pleasure" (as it is in the original) is rightly rendered "his good pleasure." See also 2 Thess. 1: 11. The insertion of *God*, or *the Father* (in italics) in Col. 1: 19 is therefore fully justified.

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#### COLOSSIANS 2: 18.

"Worshipping of angels." Revised Version,  
 "Worshipping of the angels."

Most commentators accept this interpretation. But the Greek is *θρησκεία τῶν ἀγγέλων*, literally, *religion of angels*, or *of the angels*. Tertullian interpreted it, a religion which they pretend has been

taught them by angels. Even if *θρησκεία* were limited to the meaning of *worship*, there is nothing in the text to decide positively whether the meaning must be worship offered to angels, or worship such as angels offer to God. But its meaning is not so limited. Its primitive meaning is *religion* as a system, comprising belief and practice, and including ceremonies, mysteries, and superstitions. So in Acts 26: 5, "the strictest sect of our *religion*." Secondly it signifies *piety*, as in James 1: 26, "That man's *religion* [namely, the profession of piety on the part of the man who does not bridle his tongue] is vain." Bishop Ellicott and others quote the Wisdom of Solomon, ch. 14: 27, as an example of the use of *θρησκεία* in the limited sense of *worship*. But there is nothing in that passage to prevent its being understood in its ordinary sense of *religion*. The writer had been speaking of the mysteries and ceremonies (*μυστήρια καὶ τελεταίς*, v. 15) of idolatry, and in verse 27 goes on to say that the *θρησκεία* of nameless idols is a spring and source of all evils, among which he mentions, in verse 28, falsehood, injustice, and perjury. And in verse 18 he uses the word *θρησκεία* in the sense of devotional *feeling*, to *intensify* which the art of the sculptor is called in.

Dr. Murdock renders the Syriac version of this passage, "that ye subject yourselves to the worship of angels." But there is nothing in the Syriac text to decide whether the meaning of the translators was worship offered to angels, or worship like that which the angels offer to God. Besides, the term rendered worship is a general term like the Latin *cultus*, and might better be rendered *service*. That the apostle meant religion or religious service like that of the angels is rendered highly probable by the universal claim of the monks, Eastern and Western, that their service is an *angelic service* and their life an *angelic life*.<sup>1</sup> It is by no means decisive of the question to show, as the commentators do, that *worship* has been paid to angels, in both ancient and modern times. Neither is the interpretation here proposed inconsistent with the preceding mention of humility; for extraordinary humility also has been in all ages the boast of devotees, Jewish, heathen, and Christian.

*Ἐμβατεύων* in the same verse is rendered in the Revised Version *dwelling in*. The revisers were doubtless led to give the word this forced inter-

<sup>1</sup> Tyndale and Coverdale render *θρησκεία τῶν ἀγγέλων*, *holiness of angels*.



pretation by having adopted that reading of the Greek text which omits the negative ("things which he hath *seen*," in place of "things which he hath *not seen*"). But a large majority of Greek manuscripts, both uncial and cursive, have the negative. So have the best of the ancient versions; also Origen and Chrysostom; and the *omission* of a negative by a copyist is far more likely than its insertion. Ἐμβατεύω signifies primarily *to invade*, and then by an easy figure, *to intrude*.

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COLOSSIANS 2: 23.

"Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh."

The last clause is rendered in the Revised Version, "are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh."

Ἐθελοδορησεία, like *δορησεία* in verse 18 (see the preceding note), should not be limited to the idea of *worship*, but should be understood as comprehending all *self-imposed* or *supererogatory religious*

*observances.* Πλησμονή in the last clause some interpreters (as Calvin) seek to explain of a moderate and reasonable provision for the body. But πλησμονή is *satiety*, and can not without violence be made to signify any thing within the bounds of moderation. The Revised Version takes this view of it, and renders it *indulgence*, but in order to connect the last clause with what goes before, gives to πρὸς a meaning not suited to the connection; for wherever in the New Testament πρὸς with an accusative is rendered *against*, it acquires this force by the aid of some other term, expressed or implied, with which it is connected (as complaint, accusation, bitter, etc.), and of itself might still be rendered *toward* or *in reference to*.

The Syriac Version renders, "not to any valuable purpose, but to indulge the flesh." And it is worth remarking that in the Greek text there is no δὲ in the last clause to correspond to the μὲν in the first. But even without venturing, like the Syriac Version, to supply *but*, we may get what I think was the apostle's true meaning by inserting a comma after οὐκ ἐν τιμῇ τινι, or by enclosing that clause in a parenthesis. The meaning then will be that these commandments

and doctrines of men, notwithstanding the high claims of their advocates, possess no real value, and simply pamper the flesh. It is essentially the same with that given by the Revised Version and by Conybeare and Howson, whose paraphrase is, "are of no value to check the indulgence of fleshly passions."

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## COLOSSIANS 3 : 9, 10.

"Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man."

The Syriac Version renders in the imperative, "Put off the old man . . . put on the new man," regarding the participles as made imperative by the imperative verb with which the sentence commences. The Vulgate seems to take the same view, rendering the aorist participles of the Greek by present participles. The use of the imperative in verse 12, "Put on therefore," etc., favors this view. Still there is practically not much difference between exhorting Christians to put off the old man and put on the new man, and reminding them that their baptismal vows involved the obligation to do this.

## COLOSSIANS 4: 16.

“The epistle from Laodicea.”

Doubtless the Epistle to the Ephesians, sent first to Ephesus, the port where the bearers of it would land, coming from Rome, then (in other copies) to Tralles and other cities on the way to Colosse, the last of these being Laodicea. See note on Eph. 1: 1.

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## I THESSALONIANS 4: 13-17.

**The Time of Christ's Second Coming.**

It is evident from this passage that incorrect views prevailed to some extent among the Thessalonian Christians in regard to our Lord's second coming. The time of that coming had not been revealed. The Father had kept that in his own power. The words of Jesus to his disciples were, “Watch, for ye know neither the day nor the hour” (Matt. 25: 13; Mark 13: 35, etc.). It was his intention that his people to the end of time should be ever watching for his coming. This would promote their growth in holiness and their preparation either for their own departure from

this world or for the Saviour's coming to judgment.

That the apostles did not know the time of that coming does not in the least disparage their inspired authority in regard to what they declare had been revealed to them. That authority they constantly claim. And with equal constancy they declare that the time of the Saviour's coming was unknown. While with them bodily, his word to them was, "Watch." Thirty years later he repeats the warning through his aged servant Peter: "The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer" (1 Pet. 4: 7). Another thirty years pass by and through his beloved John he cries to all his people, "Behold, I come as a thief; blessed is he that watcheth" (Rev. 16: 15). It was for their edification, for their growth in holiness, that they should not know the time of his coming, but should be ever watching for it; and practically to each believer the time of his departure from the world would be the time of his Lord's coming.

That the apostles should share in the prevailing impression that the time of the Saviour's second coming was very near is not at all strange; neither should we suffer this to conflict with

their claim to inspired authority; for they distinctly declare that they had received no revelation on the subject.

But some of the Christians at Thessalonica, looking for the day of the Lord's appearing as a day of joy and triumph to all believers, fancied that those who should die before that day would lose a great privilege and somehow be cut off from this triumph.

The apostle charges them not to indulge any such fancy, assuring them that those who shall live to see that day will not have the slightest advantage over those who have previously slept in Jesus; that the dead in Christ shall rise first, and that believers then on earth, being in an instant clothed with immortality, shall with them be caught up to meet the Lord.

In using the expression, "We that are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord," we should not understand the apostle as expressing any confidence that he would be one of those who would be living at that day. He identifies himself with the whole body of Christ's people, past, present, and future, and this expression should be taken as equivalent to "*those of us* who are alive," etc. So Hosea (ch. 12 : 4) says, "He found

him in Bethel, and there he spake with us ;" that is, God, in speaking with our father Jacob in Bethel, spake with us his descendants. In like manner the writer of the Sixty-sixth Psalm says (v. 6) :—

He turned the sea into dry land ;  
They went through the flood on foot ;  
There did we rejoice in him.

Paul's missionary life was full of exposures to death, and although it was ten years later than the time of writing this epistle that he wrote those memorable words, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ" (Phil. 1 : 23), yet we can not doubt that the same spirit animated his whole life after he knew Christ as his Lord and Saviour. He evidently made no distinction of privilege between dying in the Lord and being alive at the time of his second coming. In his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians (written apparently only a few weeks after the first) he cautions them not to misinterpret what he had previously written, so as to imagine that the day of the Lord was at hand ; and goes on to assure them that great changes must first take place (2 Thess. 2 : 1-7).

The passage we have been considering seems to have been composed so as to meet the wants of Christians in every age.

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## 2 THESSALONIANS 2 : 3-10.

*The apostasy.*

*The man of sin — the wicked one.*

*The mystery of iniquity.*

*What withholdeth — he that letteth.*

Calvin remarks that "the falling away" (ἡ ἀποστασία, v. 3), being mentioned without any qualification, must be understood to be general, and can be none other than that general corruption which had for ages overspread the visible Church; and adds, "From this we may readily gather how useful this prediction of Paul is, for it might have seemed as though that could not be a building of God that was suddenly overthrown and lay so long in ruins, had not Paul long before intimated that it would be so."

The *man of sin* and the *wicked one* evidently designate the same power, a power which would arise within the Church, for he was to sit "in the temple of God." It is generally agreed both by



Papal and Protestant commentators that the same power is here predicted to which the apostle John refers under the name of antichrist (1 John 2: 18, 22; 4: 3; and 2 John v. 7).

The apostle declares that the evil influences which tended toward the future apostasy were already working in secret "the mystery of iniquity." He reminds his Christian brethren at Thessalonica that when present with them he had warned them of this. He had also told them what it was which prevented the development of this antichristian power. Many suggestions have been offered as to what was the restraining power, τὸ κατέχον, which the apostle declared was then preventing, and until it should be "taken out of the way" would prevent, this development. From the guarded manner in which he alludes to this restraining power, it would seem to be something of which he did not feel at liberty to speak fully in a document so public as his epistles must necessarily be.

The term *antichrist* naturally designates, not merely a person or system *opposed to Christ* (for such are all false systems of religion), but a *rival of Christ*, a usurper of his prerogatives. The terms *man of sin* and *the wicked one* designate

a system opposed to the moral principles of Christianity. The gospel is a system of truth and holiness. The system, the rise of which is here predicted, would be a system of iniquity, and one to be maintained by falsehood and pretended miracles.

All this accords fully with what has actually come to pass in the Church. Already in the days of the apostles ambitious men appeared, like Diotrophes (3 John 9, 10), who desired to rule the Church for the promotion of their own selfish ends.

Tendencies toward hierarchy and a central headship and control of the Church early appeared, both in the East and in the West. These were gradually developed into claims to the supreme government of the Church, and even to supremacy over civil government. As parts of this supreme control of the Church appear the claim of power "to change times and laws," to appoint or abrogate fasts, festivals, and observances obligatory upon all Christians; to dispense with obedience to the laws of the Church, and even to the laws of God; to pronounce the forgiveness of all sin and assured admission to heaven, on conditions easily fulfilled by bad men,

and often ludicrously trifling. These and similar claims manifestly usurped prerogatives which belong to Christ alone. And that this system fostered *iniquity* and was sustained by *lying wonders*, all history testifies.

As to the *restraining power*, there can scarcely be a doubt that it was *the imperial power of Rome*. As long as this lasted in vigor, no ecclesiastical chief could advance such claims as were soon put forward when that was "taken out of the way." And this explanation accords well with the cautious manner in which the apostle introduces here the subject of the restraining power (τὸ κατέχον), or person (ὁ κατέχων), respecting which he had freely spoken when at Thessalonica, and so could now say, "Ye know what restraineth." To state openly in a published letter that the imperial power would be overthrown, would have been obviously unwise.

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I TIMOTHY I : 20.

"Delivered unto Satan." See note on I Cor. 5 : 5.

## I TIMOTHY 2: 15.

“She shall be saved in childbearing [Revised Version, ‘through the childbearing’] if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.”

Two important and difficult questions present themselves here:—(1) What is the force of the phrase *διὰ τῆς τεχνουργίας*? and (2) To *whose* continuance in faith, etc., does the apostle refer?

The oldest interpreters understood *τεχνουργία* here to mean the bearing (and rearing) of children as the normal function of woman, in contrast with the work of the ministry, to which she is not called of God (v. 12). So the Syriac Version and Chrysostom.

Several ingenious modern interpreters refer this term to the birth of Christ, and the Revised Version appears to accept this interpretation. In favor of this view are:—

1. The appropriate contrast of the leading part borne by woman in the first transgression with the special function graciously assigned to her in giving birth to the Saviour, “made of a woman.”

2. The preservation of the primary sense of the preposition *διὰ*, *through*, or *by means of*.

On the other hand it may be truly said :—

1. That the contrast offered by the older interpretation, though less striking than the one mentioned above, is still a good and natural one. Let not woman aspire to those public functions not committed to her, but rather let her fulfill well the duties assigned her.

2. The force of the preposition required by this interpretation, though secondary, is still legitimate and natural. We may understand the apostle as saying, Woman, though not called to the sacred work of the ministry, has still her appropriate way of serving God, and working out her own salvation *through* or *in the way of* her more private duties.

3. The use of the article τῆς before τεχνουργίας has been insisted on by some as favoring a reference to the birth of Christ. But the careful student of Greek knows that this argument has no force. Witness the terms *virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity* (2 Pet. 1 : 5-7), all of which have the article in the original. So also in Rom. 5 : 17 ; 6 : 18 ; 13 : 10 ; 1 Cor. 13 : 8, and multitudes of other passages.

4. The fact that the earliest interpreters did

not find here any reference to the miraculous birth of our Saviour is a strong argument against any such reference. The testimony of the Syriac Version, made so soon after the apostolic age, and in a country where both Greek and Syriac were familiarly spoken, is especially weighty. Chrysostom too, a thorough master of New Testament Greek, remarks on this passage that the apostle means "not only the bearing of children, but also the bringing them up in a godly manner."

In regard to the second question, namely, To *whose* continuance in faith, etc., does the apostle refer? I remark:—

1. The same authorities quoted above understand him as referring to the children. The term *children* is indeed not expressed, but it may be regarded as implied in the compound term *τεκνογονία*.

2. While it must be granted that a change from a singular to a plural verb, relating to the same subject, is not without example, yet in the present passage there does not appear any reason for such a change, and so to make "she shall be saved, if they continue" equivalent to "she shall be saved, if she continues," seems forced and unnatural.

If the reference is to *woman's* perseverance in faith, charity, holiness, and sobriety, then it is

simply tantamount to, "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." If the apostle's reference was to the permanent conduct of the children, we should understand him as meaning that such character and conduct on their part would be the natural fruit and proof of the faithful discharge of her duties by the mother.

The whole passage is a tender and gentle encouragement and exhortation to woman to accept loyally the subordinate position and duties which Providence has assigned to her.

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I TIMOTHY 3: 16.

"God [R. V., He who] was manifested in the flesh," etc.

Most critical editions of the Greek New Testament are now agreed in reading  $\theta\varsigma$  here instead of  $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ ; and apparently with good reason, since the oldest manuscripts and versions agree in this reading. The reading  $\theta$  (neuter, referring to  $\muυστήριον$ ) has very slight support, and is easily accounted for. The change also from  $\theta\varsigma$  to  $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$  by a copyist is easily accounted for. He who was "manifested in the flesh" must have been a divine being; could not have been a mere man.

The abruptness of commencing a quotation with  $\theta\sigma$  might therefore lead a copyist to suspect that the fine lines which alone distinguish  $\overline{\theta\sigma}$  from that reading had been obliterated, and so to insert them.

There can scarcely be a doubt that the whole passage is an extract from a hymn relating to the glorious work of our Redeemer. This supposition easily accounts for its commencing with a relative pronoun. Every reader would mentally supply the antecedent, namely, Christ,

“Who was manifested in the flesh,  
Justified in the Spirit,  
Seen of angels,  
Preached among the nations,  
Believed on in the world,  
Received up in glory.”

See note on Eph. 5 : 14.

There are still other passages in Paul's epistles which seem to be quotations from Christian hymns. A striking example is found in 2 Tim. 2 : 11-13 :—

“If we have died with him, we shall also live with him;  
If we endure, we shall also reign with him;  
If we deny him, he also will deny us;  
If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful;  
He can not deny himself.”



That this passage is a quotation is rendered highly probable by the formula by which it is introduced, Πιστὸς ὁ λόγος.

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■ TIMOTHY 2: 26 (last clause).

"Who are taken captive by him at his will."

The Revised Version renders it, "Having been taken captive by the Lord's servant unto the will of God," with a marginal note, "Or, *by the devil unto the will of God.* Greek, *by him unto the will of him.* In the Greek the two pronouns are different."

In the interpretation of the first clause of this verse, "And that they may recover themselves [that is, may rouse up and escape] out of the snare of the devil," there is no serious difference among commentators. Respecting the last clause various views have been set forth and urged.

I. The Revised Version takes the perfect passive participle ἐξωγρημένοι, *caught*, in a sense corresponding to that in which our Saviour said to Peter, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt *catch* men," and so interprets it of the part borne

by the "servant of the Lord," mentioned in verse 24, in the deliverance of the sinner from the devil's snare. This would be admissible so far as the primary meaning of the verb is concerned. But there are serious objections to this interpretation here.

1. The participle here used most naturally describes *a state* in which the poor captives were found, and not the transfer from that state to liberty. This the best critics admit.

2. The figure of *being caught* by the Lord's servant does not tally well with that of *rousing themselves up and escaping*.

3. The reference of *αὐτοῦ* to so remote an antecedent as the "servant of the Lord," in verse 24 appears objectionable, seeing there are two nearer antecedents, with either of which it might agree.

The revisers doubtless adopted this interpretation to avoid the reference of the two pronouns, *αὐτοῦ* and *ἐξελίνου* to the same person. I admit the difficulty; but it does not seem to me insuperable. For, —

(1) The earliest versions refer both pronouns to the same being, Satan.

(2) We have in 1 John 3 : 3 the same two pronouns, occurring in the same order and referring

unmistakably to the same person, Christ, the only difference in the force of the two being that the second is slightly more emphatic than the first. "He that hath this hope in him [in Christ] purifieth himself, even as *he* [Christ, *that* holy being] is pure."

So it seems to me not at all harsh or unreasonable to refer both these pronouns, in the passage under consideration, to Satan. "Taken captive by him, to do *his* will" (the will of that fearful tyrant).

I do not understand the expression, "at his will," as used by the Authorized Version, to signify merely *at his caprice*, but rather as designed to be equivalent to *unto his will*, or *so held captive that they must do his will*. At any rate such is the force of the preposition here employed.

There is another interpretation of this clause which has been advocated by learned men (among them Bishop Ellicott), still with the view of assigning the two pronouns, not to the same, but to different persons. This interpretation regards the words ἐξωγρημένοι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ as parenthetical, and so connects ἀνανήψωσιν with εἰς τὸ ἐξείνουν θέλημα, making the whole verse mean, that those who had been taken captive by Satan may return

to soberness (escaping) from his snare, that they may do God's will.

My objections to this view are :—

(1) That to make the words ἐξωγρημένοι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ a parenthesis seems forced. I find no authority for it in any ancient version; neither do I find a comma after these words in any of the best critical editions of the New Testament.

(2) The double connexion of ἀναγέψωσιν with ἐκ τῆς παγίδος and with εἰς τὸ θέλημα seems hard, although it might be connected with either separately.

I therefore regard as decidedly most probable the interpretation of the Authorized Version, confirmed, as it is, by the ancient versions, and accepted by a large majority of commentators.

#### HEBREWS 1 : 5.

"I will be to him a Father and he shall be to me a Son."

These words, quoted from 2 Sam. 7 : 14, originally referred to Solomon, as the context plainly shows. How then does the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews refer them to the Messiah? An-

swer, Solomon was a type of the Messiah, as was David himself. By *type* we are to understand a person or thing which possesses not merely an accidental resemblance to the person or thing typified, but a designed likeness, gradually unfolded in the divine economy so that names, titles, and attributes applied to the *type* shall be equally, or even more appropriately applicable to the *anti-type*, that is, the person or thing typified. In Ezek. 37: 24, 25 the Messiah is called David (that is, *the Beloved*). As this prediction, that *David* should in the latter days rule over God's people, was written more than four centuries after the death of David, the son of Jesse, it could not but be manifest to devout readers that the Messiah, the great son of David, was meant. So here Solomon (the *peaceful* prince), chosen of God to build the temple, was designedly made like to the Messiah, who was to build the spiritual temple, and that special favor and protection implied in the promise, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son," belonged not only to Solomon, but still more appropriately and in a higher sense to his great descendant, Jesus, the Son of God.

Thus much in justification of the application

of this promise to the Messiah. Now for the contrast between him and the angels. Doubtless all God's intelligent creatures may in a general sense be called his children. The "sons of God," mentioned in Job 38: 7 were doubtless angels. But to no individual angel is the title "Son of God" given in the Scriptures. The angels are represented as God's faithful servants, eager to do his bidding; but no one of them is specially designated as his Son. So in ch. 3: 5, 6 our Lord is contrasted with Moses, who "was faithful as a *servant*," set over God's house, "but Christ as a *Son*."

The last clause of verse 6, "And let all the angels of God worship him," we naturally look for in the Old Testament; but we fail to find it. The Septuagint indeed has the words (except that the best texts read *sons* instead of *angels*) inserted in Deut. 32: 43, but it is not supported by any of the other ancient versions. "Worship him, all ye gods" (in Ps. 97: 7) is too remote to be regarded as the source of the quotation. Besides, if that passage were accepted as the source of this, it would be difficult to show the appropriateness of the first part of the verse, "When he bringeth the First-begotten into the world."

Perhaps the best solution of the difficulty will be found in the supposition that the last clause is quoted from a Christian hymn, and so naturally refers to the birth of Christ and to the homage paid him by angels, who, as we know, joyfully hailed and announced his coming into the world. For other instances of probable quotations from Christian hymns, see notes on Eph. 5 : 14 and 1 Tim. 3 : 16.

That the Forty-fifth Psalm, from which verses 8 and 9 are quoted, is a Messianic Psalm is evident from the fact that the King addressed is directly called *God*, while yet in the following verse the Father is called *his God*.

Verses 10-12 are quoted from the One Hundred and Second Psalm, which does not appear to be specifically Messianic. We may regard the application of this passage to Christ as resting on the inspired apostle's authority, in accordance with those passages of Scripture in which creation is directly ascribed to Christ. See John 1 : 3 ; Col. 1 : 16, 17.

## HEBREWS 2 : 13.

“I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.”

The first quotation is from 2 Sam. 22 : 3 (slightly varied in the same composition as exhibited in Ps. 18 : 2), and the second from Is. 8 : 18. The former related primarily to David, and the latter to Isaiah. How then does the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews refer both to the Messiah? Answer, either :—

1. As accepting the current interpretation of the Jews, and reasoning with them from their own concessions ; or,

2. As regarding both David and Isaiah as truly types of Christ.

The latter seems to me the preferable view. Both prophesied in a remarkable manner of the coming Saviour. Both were in an extraordinary degree filled with the spirit which animated and governed him. And the experiences of both were designedly made like to his, so that language which would describe their views and feelings would describe his also. The apostle could not have failed to know that the words here quoted



referred originally to David and to Isaiah. But he seems to have regarded both these prophets as types of Christ, so that, in the language of Professor Moses Stuart, "As the type confided in God, because he possessed a nature that was dependent and human, so the Antitype must have a like nature in order to use the same language; and as the type bore the relation of parent to children that were pledges of future blessings (and therefore possessed a like nature with them), so the Antitype had a community of nature with those who were his spiritual children, and were pledges that all his promises should be performed."

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## HEBREWS 6: 1-6.

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection," etc.

Revised Version, "Wherefore let us cease to speak of the first principles of Christ, and press on unto perfection," etc.

In the first three verses of this chapter the writer of the epistle invites his Hebrew fellow-Christians to unite with him in advancing from

the elementary teachings of Christianity, such as repentance, faith, baptism, etc., needful for babes in Christ, to such other themes as would be for the edification of full-grown Christians.

The next three verses state a reason for pursuing this course. *For* it is impossible, etc. Here it seems to me that most of the commentators have missed the connection between vs. 1-3 and vs. 4-6. Dr. Doddridge appears to me to have expressed it truly. Alluding to the case of those who had *fallen away* (that is, had fallen back to Judaism and thus crucified Christ afresh, by joining with those who rejected and crucified him), Dr. Doddridge adds in his paraphrase, at the beginning of verse 7, "We will therefore, without any further efforts for the recovery of such, leave them to the awful sentence which he hath pronounced against them." If this be the correct view, it is as if the apostle had said, "Let us not continue to dwell upon and reiterate these elementary principles [as if in the hope of winning back to Christianity those who had fallen away], *for* it is vain to expect by such efforts *to renew them* again to repentance." We thus get the most natural signification of the *for* at the beginning of verse 4, and of the active verb *to*

*renew* in verse 6 (namely, *to restore instrumentally*. Compare Jas. 5 : 20, "He that converteth a sinner," etc.), which has puzzled the commentators, many of whom have labored to show that it might have been used for a passive or an impersonal verb.

Taking this view, we do not need to understand the writer as stating that it is *absolutely impossible* for an apostate to be restored, or as approaching the theoretical question whether a true Christian can fall from grace, but simply as saying in a popular manner that it is useless to expect to bring back deserters of the Christian cause by a perpetual reiteration of the elementary truths of the gospel.

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HEBREWS 7 : 3.

"Without father, without mother, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually."

If we were bound to understand the inspired writer as affirming that Melchizedek was literally without father or mother, literally without beginning of days or end of life, then must we conclude, as did some of the fathers of the

Church, that he was indeed the Son of God, for not even a created angel could be said to be literally "without beginning of days." But this inference is forbidden by the context. For if he was himself the Son of God, how could he be made *like* the Son of God? Far more simple and satisfactory is it to understand the apostle as saying that Melchizedek, *as presented to our view in the sacred narrative of the Old Testament*, being designedly made a type of Christ, was introduced *without mention* of father or mother, or any genealogy like those so carefully kept to show the descent of the Levitical priests from Aaron, and without any record of his birth or death. He was presented, too, as Abraham's superior, inasmuch as he gave Abraham his blessing. "And without controversy the inferior is blessed by the superior."

Thus was the *type* set forth, so that when in the One Hundred and Tenth Psalm the Lord would show the superiority of the priesthood of the Antitype to that of the Levitical priests, it was only necessary to call it a priesthood "after the order of Melchizedek." The reader of that Psalm would turn to the story of Melchizedek in the book of Genesis, and there find the record of one

who was at the same time a king and a priest of the Most High God, one superior to the venerated patriarch Abraham, one respecting whom not a word is said of his having received his priesthood from a predecessor or having transmitted it to a successor, nothing respecting the beginning of his days or the end of his life. From all this the devout Jewish reader might infer that the priesthood of the Messiah would differ greatly from that of the descendants of Aaron. The differences and the superiority of Christ in every particular the apostle goes on to specify through the remainder of the chapter.

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HEBREWS 9: 6-9.

"The priests went always [R. V., *go in continually*] . . . which he offered [R. V., *offereth*] . . . the first tabernacle was [R. V., *is*] yet standing; . . . could not [R. V., *can not*]" . . .

Several commentators have confidently charged the common English Version with mistranslation here in using a past tense for a present in this passage. The writer feels equal confidence in maintaining its correctness. The Syriac Version,

fifteen centuries before it, treated the whole passage in precisely the same way. Verse 1 declares that the first covenant *had* (not *has*) ordinances; verse 2, that a tabernacle *was constructed*; and verse 6, that these things (the tabernacle and its contents) *having been so constructed*, the priests *enter*, etc. The writer uses a present tense; but the connection justifies us in taking this as an historical present, and understanding him as saying that the tabernacle, etc., having been thus constructed, the priests began and continued to enter in and perform the appointed services as a figure of the good things which the new covenant was to bring; and in verse 11 he goes on to say that when Christ came (showing that what he had said concerning the ordinances of the first covenant related to the time before the coming of Christ), . . . he *entered*, once for all, into the holy place. Christ's perfect work *has taken the place* of the oft-repeated typical services of the old tabernacle. In this view, and considering that our language uses the historical present tense much more sparingly than the Greek, it seems to me that a translator is fully justified in rendering the passage as the Syriac and the Authorized English versions have done.

HEBREWS 9: 16.

"For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator."

A difficulty arises here from the necessity of translating the same Greek word (*διαθήκη*) *testament* which is elsewhere rightly rendered *covenant*. We should not, however, regard these as two separate and independent significations of the word, but rather as two shades of one general meaning. *Διατίθημι* is *to dispose, to arrange*. Hence *διαθήκη* signifies the *disposal* or *arrangement* of the relations between God and his covenant people. The people were indeed graciously admitted to it as a party, and so we rightly call it a covenant. Still it was God's sovereign *disposal* or *arrangement*, and hence he is said to have *enjoined* it upon the people (v. 20). When used for that *disposal* which a man makes of his property in a will, *διαθήκη* is rightly rendered *testament*. The apostle glides in this chapter from the one shade of meaning to the other, and that, not carelessly and inaccurately, but in view of the great fact that the blessings of the new covenant can be conferred only *through the death of Christ*, and so may well be viewed as a

*legacy*, which comes into the possession of the heir only through the death of the testator.

This feature of the new covenant was anticipated and prefigured by the dedication, or inauguration, of the old covenant with the shedding of blood, and by Moses' sprinkling it upon the book and upon the people (vs. 19, 20). And our Saviour, in instituting his Supper as a memorial of his atoning death, gave his disciples the cup, saying, "This cup is my blood of the new covenant [*or*, is the new covenant in my blood] which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins."

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#### HEBREWS II : I.

\* "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Revised Version, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen." The American Committee prefers *assurance* instead of *the assurance*, and *a conviction* instead of *the proving*.

Still other renderings have been proposed for the words *ὑπόστασις* (literally, *substance*) and *ἔλεγχος* (literally, *setting forth*), here employed to define



faith. I understand the former as meaning in this connexion a giving substance, or making substantial, that is, a presentation of things hoped for as substantial, real; the latter, not as the ad-ducing of evidence or proof, but as a setting forth or making clear, to the mind of the believer, of things unseen. If we must render them by single words, I would suggest *realization* and *manifestation*, but should prefer the phrases, *making substantial* and *making clear*, or, in other words, "Faith is that which gives substance to things hoped for, and clearness to things not seen."

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JAMES 2 : 10.

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

We can not understand these words as meaning that all transgressions of the law are equally heinous, or that a single transgression involves as much guilt as many transgressions. The nature of the case forbids this. We must therefore understand them as referring to a deliberate setting aside of one of God's commandments. He who, while professing a general regard for the

divine law, deliberately sets aside one precept, dishonors the whole law and disowns the authority of the Lawgiver, and so "is guilty of all."

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JAMES 2 : 21, 25

"Justified by works."

Here simple candor forbids us to find any contradiction of the doctrine of justification by faith without (any dependence upon) the works of the law. James recognizes here, as in the first verse of this chapter, faith as the essential characteristic of a true Christian; only he insists that it must be a living, not a dead faith, and that the proof that it is a living and saving faith must be seen, as it was seen in Abraham and in Rahab, in corresponding conduct. Paul also says (Rom. 2 : 13), "Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the *doers* of the law shall be justified." In saying this, does he contradict his own grand doctrine of justification by faith? By no means.

## I PETER 3 : 18-20.

**Christ's Preaching to the Spirits in Prison.**

The only remark necessary on verse 18 is that the last word, πνεύματι, is plainly antithetical to σαρκί, and therefore should be rendered, *in* (his) *spirit*, and not, as in the Authorized Version, *by the spirit*.

Verse 19 introduces a topic which has greatly puzzled the commentators, and concerning which we can do little more than to state the various interpretations which have been given to the passage and some of the objections which lie against them. The interpretations fall naturally under two heads, namely, those which regard the preaching of which the apostle writes as having been done in Hades, and those which do not. The following are the principal interpretations under each head :—

- I. The preaching was, in Hades,
  1. To the souls of the impenitent antediluvians;
  2. To such of them as repented before being engulfed by the flood;
  3. To the righteous dead who in Hades awaited the coming of Christ;

4. To the souls of both righteous and wicked, announcing deliverance to the former and condemnation to the latter.

II. Not in person, nor in Hades,

1. By Noah to his contemporaries ;
2. By the apostles and other preachers of the gospel.

There can be no doubt that the *earliest Christian writers* understood the apostle's words here as relating to an actual visit of our Saviour to the lower world. The Syriac Version is a witness of this ; for it renders the words "the spirits in prison" by "the spirits shut up in Sheol." Irenæus, Tertullian, and other very early fathers concur in this view, but regard the preaching as having consisted in announcing deliverance to *the righteous dead*. How they could infer this from the words of Peter, who speaks only of *those who were disobedient in the days of Noah*, it is hard to imagine.

The idea of our Lord's descent into Hades between his death and his resurrection was incorporated into the earliest creeds of the Church. But it must be admitted that grave doubt is thrown over this whole theory by the interpretation which was given by its earliest

advocates to our Saviour's preaching in Hades (namely, announcing deliverance to the righteous dead), and which has continued to be that of the Roman and Eastern churches to the present time. For neither in this passage nor in any other part of the Scriptures do we find a word of any such preaching *to the pious dead*.

The idea of interpreting the words of the apostle, "who were disobedient in the days of Noah," as meaning such of them as may have repented after the ark was closed, but before they were overwhelmed by the waters of the flood, may be dismissed at once as an unsupported theory, adopted simply to get rid of a difficulty.

The notion of Christ's *preaching* being simply a *proclamation of his triumph over his enemies* seems to me to merit an equally summary rejection, the New Testament usage requiring us to understand the term *preaching* as a proclamation of *good tidings*.

If we then fall back on what seems the simplest meaning of Saint Peter's words, namely, that the gospel was preached by our Saviour to the spirits of those who perished by the flood in their disobedience, we are confronted by equally great difficulties. If it was to them an offer of salva-

tion: why to them more than to the rest of the dead? and why have we no hint of any thing of the kind in all the rest of the Scriptures? If it was not such an offer, in what sense could Christ be said to have *preached* to them?

It should be added here that some of the early fathers held that the apostles also visited Hades and preached the gospel there in imitation of their Lord.

We come then to those interpretations which regard the preaching mentioned by the apostle Peter in this passage as not being in Hades, nor by the Saviour in person. The principal of these are:—

1. That the spirit of Christ preached through Noah to the men of that corrupt age who continued to be *disobedient* all the time that the long-suffering of God waited while the ark was preparing. This view has been ably defended by recent writers. In favor of it has been alleged the mention by the apostle of that divine *waiting* as implying (though Peter does not affirm this) that the preaching was during that period of God's long-suffering, their day of grace. Also the fact that "the spirit of Christ" is elsewhere spoken of as inspiring the prophets (1 Pet. 1 : 11).

But the context does not favor this interpretation. Christ "*went* and preached to the spirits in prison." It is very difficult to see how the apostle could say this of Christ's spirit speaking through Noah. Compare the same participle, *πορευθεῖς*, used in the last verse of this chapter of Christ's *going* to heaven. Besides, the apostle does not say that Christ *once preached* to those who were disobedient, but that he preached to the spirits in prison who *once were disobedient*. Augustine, who referred the preaching to Noah, explained the prison as the prison of unbelief and sin, and others who have held the same view have referred to the promise that the Messiah should proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound (Is. 61 : 1 ; Luke 4 : 18). But this explanation seems forced and unnatural.

2. Some commentators (among them the learned H. Grotius) refer the preaching here mentioned to that of the apostles and other preachers of the gospel animated by the spirit of Christ, and take the spirits in prison to mean men, either Jews or Gentiles, held in bondage by Satan, and would have us believe that the antediluvians are named merely as specimens of such

unbelievers. Professor John Brown, D.D., of Edinburgh,<sup>1</sup> says: "This difficulty is not a formidable one. We see nothing perplexing in the statement, 'God sent the gospel to the Britons, who in the days of Cæsar were painted savages.' The persons to whom God sent the gospel were not the same individuals who were painted savages in the days of Cæsar, but they belonged to the same race." I leave it to the reader to judge whether the cases are sufficiently parallel to afford any argument in favor of the interpretation advocated by Grotius and by Dr. Brown.

I will only add two remarks:—

1. We have no right to base *a dogma* upon an obscure passage like this, which has given rise to so many conflicting interpretations. Even if the descent of Christ into Hades could be unquestionably proved, it has no more right to a place in a creed than the well-known fact that he spent thirty years of his earthly life as a resident in Nazareth, or than many other facts recorded in the Scriptures.

2. Especially should we beware of drawing any inferences from this text which would weaken or contradict the testimony of the Scriptures that

<sup>1</sup> *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. iv, p. 720.



the final judgment will be according to the deeds done in the body, and that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment. We should strive to maintain that impression which the words of Christ himself naturally make on our minds, and leave the secret, unrevealed things to the Judge of all the earth, who will certainly do right.

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I PETER 3 : 20, 21.

"Saved by water; . . . baptism doth also now save us," etc.

Noah and his family are here spoken of as having been "saved by water." This is interpreted by some as signifying, saved by the ark, which was borne up by the waters of the flood. I prefer, with the Revised Version, to render, "saved through water," and to understand the expression figuratively as meaning, *brought in safety through* the waters of the flood. The strict meaning of διασώζω is *to bring safely through*. See Acts 23 : 24 and 27 : 44. This representation of Noah as passing *through the flood* from the old world to the new renders easy the transition to the thought of baptism, which marks the

passing of the believer from his old life of sin to his new life in Christ.

In verse 21 the chief doubt rests on the interpretation of ἐπερώτημα. Fronmüller, in Lange's commentary, interprets it *a seeking after a good conscience*. But his translator, Dr. Mombert, thinks that it refers to the *interrogatories* which preceded baptism, and quotes Tertullian and other early writers, who take the term here used as expressive of the *response* to those interrogatories, or as comprising the interrogatories and the responses (ἐπερωτήσεις καὶ ἀποκρίσεις).

Calvin also takes this view, for he says, "The interrogatory here is taken for the response or testimony." This is by no means a harsh figure, and it seems to me to give the apostle's true meaning, namely, that in baptism the essential thing is not the outward ordinance, but the honest, conscientious profession of renouncing the world, the flesh, and the devil, and choosing God for the soul's portion.

It is true that the verb ἐρωτάω sometimes signifies *to ask for* a thing which one desires. But I doubt if a parallel can be found for the interpretation of ἐπερώτημα in the sense of *seeking for*. Besides, a good conscience is an essential element

in a profession of faith in Christ, not, as Frömmüller represents, a benefit to be attained through baptism.

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I PETER 4: 6.

"For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead," etc. [R. V., "For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead."]

Those who interpret 1 Pet. 3: 19 of a preaching in Hades understand this verse as relating to the same event. And then they seek an interpretation of the last clause of this verse which would correspond with this reference. Others understand the *dead* here as meaning those *dead in sin*. But they too are puzzled to find a suitable meaning for being judged according to men in the flesh, but living according to God in the spirit. Some have understood that judgment of the universal liability of men to the death of the body; others of condemnation by men, and especially of the martyrs condemned and slain so far as the body is concerned. But κατὰ ἀνθρώπους can hardly be made to mean *by men*. Even the idea of being judged according to human judg-

ment would require rather the singular *κατὰ ἀνθρώπου*, than the plural, *κατὰ ἀνθρώπων*. I have not seen one of these interpretations which appeared to be entirely satisfactory to the commentator who proposed it.

Some have insisted strongly on the *context* as affording the only clew to the interpretation, and especially on what is said in verse 12 and following verses of the fiery trial of persecution. But this is unsafe, for verse 12 evidently begins a new paragraph, following the doxology in verse 11, which closes with the solemn Amen.

It seems to me we shall be safest if we take the terms *judge* and *the dead* as having in verse 6 the same sense which they plainly have in verse 5. The *judgment* will then be the final judgment of God, and *the dead* those who have died before that final judgment. We know from 1 Thess. 4: 13-17 that there existed among the first Christians an erroneous impression, which Paul considered it necessary to correct, that somehow those who should die before the second coming of Christ would be at a disadvantage as compared with those who should then be living. Now in verse 5 the judgment is manifestly the last judgment and the dead are those who have died before

that judgment. If we take these terms as having the same meaning in the following verse, the sense will be that there will be no difference between the judgment of the two classes, the living and the dead. Those who shall have died before that time had the gospel preached to them (while they lived), and so will be judged precisely as those who are then living *σαρχί, in the body*, while *πνεύματι, in the spirit*, namely, in the interval between their death and the judgment, they *live κατὰ θεόν, according to God*, in the same sense in which our Saviour said (Luke 20: 38) that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob should not be thought of as dead, but as *living to him*, not there meaning to his glory, but either with a spirit-life like that of God, or in his view.

Taking this view, there is no need of connecting this passage with ch. 3: 19, whatever interpretation we may give to that much disputed text.

If it be objected to this view that it connects *σαρχί* with *ἀνθρώπους*, I remark:—(1) That even so the antithesis with *κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι* is not destroyed, for men are judged in the body (changed indeed, but still in the body), and God's life is that of a spirit; and (2) That the sense is not

materially changed if we connect both of these adverbial datives with the verbs. The dead will arise, and will be judged in the restored body.

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## 2 PETER I: 19.

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy.” [R. V., “And we have the word of prophecy *made* more sure.”] More literally, “And we have, more sure, the prophetic word.”

That the prophetic word, or word of prophecy, signifies the Scriptures of the Old Testament, there can be no doubt. The point on which commentators have differed is the question what the apostle meant by designating it as *more sure*. Some have understood him as meaning that the prophetic word has been made more sure to us (than it was before) by the additional revelations given to the apostles. The insertion of the word *made* (in italics) in the Revised Version seems to indicate that this was the view of the Revisers. But it is scarcely possible to imagine that the apostle should think of the divinely inspired Scriptures as needing any confirmation. Still less can we accept the idea

suggested by others, that the apostle is speaking here of the Holy Scriptures as more sure than the cunningly devised fables referred to in verse 16. It can scarcely be doubted that the comparison was between the evidence to the truth of the gospel furnished by such visions of the Saviour's glory as he, with his two fellow-disciples, had seen on the mount of transfiguration and that furnished by the prophetic Scriptures. And he speaks of the latter as *more sure*, not that he himself had any doubt in respect to the former, but because *to his readers* the witness of the Scriptures was more fully within reach, and absolutely sure and unquestionable. In commending to his readers the diligent study of the Old Testament Scriptures and walking by their light, he did what all his fellow-apostles had done, and their Master before them.

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2 PETER I : 20.

"No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation."

Some have claimed that this text forbids the interpretation of Scripture *by private individuals*,

insisting that *the Church* has in some way authority to furnish interpretations of the Scriptures, which all private members are bound to accept. But this is grammatically inadmissible ; for there is no previous mention of interpreters or of individuals to whom *ιδίας* might be supposed to refer. Its only possible antecedent is *προφητεία*. No prophecy of the Scripture, that is, no particular portion of the writings of the prophets, has its own private (or *special*, as in the margin of the Revised Version) interpretation, as if it had originated in the particular views of this or that writer. And this accords with what follows, "For prophecy came not by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Therefore in our diligent study of the Scriptures we must lay it down as a fundamental principle that every particular passage of the Scriptures must be interpreted in harmony with the teaching of the whole, as being all utterances of one and the same Spirit.

Calvin reaches virtually the same result, but appears to prefer the unsupported reading *ἐπηλύσεως* (as if equivalent to *ἐπελεύσεως*), and so renders the phrase by "*proprio hominum motu*."

Others, accepting the common reading (which



is supported by almost all Greek manuscripts and by all the old versions), explain it as meaning interpretation by the prophet of the mind of the Spirit. But this seems far-fetched and needless.

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I JOHN 3 : 9.

Last clause, "He cannot sin, because he is born of God."

It is important here to notice the use by the apostle of the present infinitive verb, which designates continued or repeated action. If he had made use of the aorist and written οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτεῖν, it would have signified, He can not commit a single sin. Writing as he did, οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν, he tells us that whosoever is born of God can not sin habitually. This is what his new nature forbids. And this clause furnishes a key to the apostle's meaning in the whole passage (vs. 3-9), and shows its entire harmony with those passages in which he declares that believers do sometimes fall into sin, and so need an advocate with the Father (ch. 1 : 8 ; 2 : 2).

## I JOHN 5 : 6-8.

"This is he that came by water and blood," etc.

From the importance which the apostle John attributes to the flowing of both water and blood from the pierced side of our Saviour (John 19 : 34, 35), we must infer that he regarded them as symbolical, the water of cleansing, and the blood of Christ's atoning work, both essential to our salvation. And a comparison of that passage with this will, I think, leave no doubt that he here alludes to the same event and to the same symbolical meaning of the water and of the blood. It is then as if he had said, Christ came not only to cleanse his people, but also to make atonement for their sins.

These symbols (the water and the blood) were *witnesses*, inasmuch as they set forth the work of Christ. The Spirit also bore witness by his miraculous gifts, thus setting his seal to the truth as preached by the apostles. Our Saviour called the Spirit *the Spirit of truth* (John 16 : 13), and John here says, "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit *is the truth*." Since the Holy Spirit works *through the truth* (John 17 : 17), it is eminently appropriate that he should be represented as bearing witness to Christ.

The words, "in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one: and there are three that bear witness in earth," are not found in a single Greek manuscript earlier than the twelfth century, nor in any of the most ancient versions. They seem to have been interpolated, first in the Latin Vulgate, not earlier than the eighth century, and then to have been translated from Latin into Greek and inserted in late Greek manuscripts. They must therefore be rejected from the text. Probably they were not originally intended as a fraudulent interpolation, but rather as a marginal note, exhibiting either what seemed to the copyist a striking analogy, or an expression of what he regarded as symbolized by "the Spirit, and the water, and the blood."

The Revised Version is therefore right in reading simply, "For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood."

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JUDE, vs. 14, 15.

### **Enoch's Prophecy.**

The writer of this epistle appears here to quote from an apocryphal book written probably towards the close of the second century B.C. This led

some very early Christian writers to doubt the canonical authority of the Epistle of Jude. There is nothing, however, inconsistent with Jude's having written under the influence of divine inspiration in his quoting from an uninspired book, provided the quoted passage preserved a genuine ancient tradition; and certainly it is quite as candid and liberal to take this for granted as to deny it. Paul quotes repeatedly from heathen writers, and he mentions the names of Jannes and Jambres, men who withstood Moses, names doubtless preserved by tradition, but not found in the canonical books of the Old Testament.

The Epistle of Jude is mentioned in the list of canonical books preserved in Muratori's Fragment (date about A.D. 170), was quoted by Origen, and was commented on by Clement of Alexandria.

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### REVELATION.

NOTE. Nearly the whole of the Apocalypse may well be regarded as belonging among the *difficult passages* of the New Testament. It would, however, be beyond the scope of these Notes to go into an examination of the symbolical representations of this wonderful book. I shall limit myself, as in the preceding books, to a few passages which present to the ordinary reader exceptional difficulty.

REVELATION I : 20.

"The angels of the seven churches."

The term *angel* here and in chapters 2 and 3 evidently designates the chief pastor of a local church. The difficulty connected with this appellation is how to account for the use of the term in this sense. And this difficulty arises from the fact that neither in earlier nor in later times do we find the term so used. On this point I remark :—

1. In the first days of the Christian churches we find no trace of a *chief pastor*. All the elders exercised pastoral care and supervision. Thus Paul (Acts 20 : 28) addresses all the *elders* of the church at Ephesus as *overseers* (ἐπίσκοποι) and exhorts them to *feed* (literally, *to do the work of pastors for*) the church, and Peter (1 Pet. 5 : 1, 2) exhorts the elders to feed the flock of God.

2. In the interval of some thirty-three years, between the deaths of Peter and Paul and that of John, it appears to have been found advantageous to the local churches to select one of the elders as a chief pastor or overseer of the church, devoting his whole time (which the other elders did not) to preaching and pastoral work, or as Paul

expresses it in 1 Tim. 5: 17, to laboring in the word and in teaching.

3. In the days immediately succeeding John's death (as witnessed by the epistles of Ignatius), this chief pastor was called ἐπίσκοπος, the other elders retaining the name πρεσβύτεροι.

4. The Old Testament prophets are called *pastors* (Jer. 3: 15; 17: 16). They are also called *angels*, as being God's messengers to the people. In Hag. 1: 13 Haggai is called the Lord's messenger (in Hebrew *malach*, *angel*; the same word constantly used to designate the heavenly angels), and in Mal. 3: 1 the same name is given to the forerunner of Christ.

5. So long, therefore, as the terms ἐπίσκοπος and πρεσβύτερος continued to be used as synonymous (as they are throughout the apostolic epistles), we can easily see how the term *angel* or *messenger* might be employed to designate that one from the board of elders who was chosen to be the chief pastor.

Of other explanations which seem to me inadmissible, the principal are:—

(1) That this term is derived from the title of an officer of the Jewish synagogue called the *sheliakh*, or messenger. But the best authorities

state that the *sheliakh* was not a chief officer of the synagogue, but a simple clerk and messenger.

(2) That pastors are called ἄγγελοι simply as leading the devotions of the congregations, and thus being *their messengers to God*.

(3) That the angels of the churches were *heavenly angels*, having a special charge committed to them in reference to those churches. So Origen and many of the ancient commentators.

(4) That they were simple *messengers* from John to the seven churches, or from the churches to John.

The sufficient reply to all these theories is that the contents of the letters addressed to these ἄγγελοι imply throughout that they are men, fallible and sometimes very faulty men, and yet men entrusted with the responsibility of guiding the churches and of correcting abuses.

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#### REVELATION 7 : 5-8.

#### **The Names of the Twelve Tribes of Israel.**

In the list here given the name of Levi is retained, that of Dan omitted, and that of Joseph appears instead of Ephraim.

When the land of Canaan was divided among

the tribes of Israel, the tribe of Levi received no inheritance, but only cities for residence among the other tribes. Yet was the number of the tribes made good by the descendants of Joseph being divided into two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh.

So in Ezekiel's prophetic vision of the latter days, strips across the whole breadth of the land from east to west are assigned to the same twelve tribes (Ezek. 48: 1-7; 23-27), excluding Levi, for whom special provision was made in the vicinity of the temple (v. 13); but when the gates of the restored city are named from the twelve tribes, all of whom were to share alike in its services and privileges (v. 19), the original twelve are restored, Levi giving name to one gate, and Joseph to only one.

This is analogous to the appearance of the name of Levi among the tribes in this chapter, and the sealing of twelve thousand from among his descendants, the same as from the other tribes, and we may reasonably regard this as pointing to an equality of privilege in the new Jerusalem, where no tribe has priesthood to the exclusion of the rest, but all are kings and priests unto God.



But why was Dan omitted? Such an omission could obviously not be unintentional. Andreas of the fifth century, and Arethas, later (both bishops of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, and authors of commentaries on the Apocalypse), attribute this omission to the traditional belief that antichrist was to spring from the tribe of Dan; and this tradition we may well suppose to have originated in the fact recorded in Judges 18: 19, 30, that the portion of that tribe which emigrated to the northernmost part of the land was the first to set up idolatry as the religion of the tribe.

Others affirm, from Jewish authorities, that the tribe of Dan had become extinct before the Christian era. Possibly this statement may have meant only that their tribal organization had disappeared, the dismembered portions of the tribe having been merged in the stronger neighboring tribes of Judah and Naphtali.<sup>1</sup>

The name of Dan being omitted (whether on account of the Danites having been the first to establish idolatry as the religion of their tribe, or

<sup>1</sup> If the northern portion, which settled on the border of Naphtali, was annexed to that tribe, would not this afford a natural explanation of the fact that the mother of Hiram, Solomon's architect, is said in 2 Chron. 2: 14 to have been "a woman of the daughters of Dan," and yet in 1 Kings 7: 14 is called "a widow of the tribe of Naphtali"?

on account of the tribe having become extinct), the number of the tribes is again made up by reckoning the descendants of Joseph as two tribes. And here the name of Joseph appears instead of Ephraim. Arethas attributes this to the desirableness of having the name of Joseph appear with those of the other patriarchs. If this be the true explanation, we can easily see why the name of Joseph should take the place of Ephraim rather than of Manasseh. For in the blessing of Jacob (Gen. 48: 19, 20), Ephraim, though Joseph's younger son, was preferred before Manasseh; and in the history of the northern tribes Ephraim appears every-where as the leading tribe.

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#### REVELATION 11: 2.

"Forty and two months."

This period coincides with the "time and times and half a time" (that is, three years and a half) mentioned in Dan. 7: 25; 12: 7, and Rev. 12: 14, and with the "thousand two hundred and threescore days," in Rev. 11: 3 and 12: 6.

The use of *time* for *a year* has its parallel in

the "seven times" which were to pass over Nebuchadnezzar during the period of his derangement (Dan. 4: 16, 25, 32), and is illustrated by the change in the use of the Greek word χρόνος, which originally signified *time*, but is used by later writers in the sense of *a year*.

Many commentators have explained these designations as indicating a period of 1,260 years, each day being taken for a year, appealing to Num. 14: 33, 34; Ezek. 4: 4-6, and Dan. 9: 24-27, where days are spoken of as corresponding to the same number of years, or weeks as representing periods of seven years. But these passages, when carefully examined, afford not the slightest support to this theory. In the passages in Numbers and Ezekiel the words *day* and *year* preserve throughout their proper signification. In the passage cited from Daniel the word rendered *weeks* is in the original simply *sevens*, and may just as well refer to years as to days.

The passage in Daniel 8: 14, where the period of two thousand and three hundred days, ending with the cleansing of the sanctuary, is mentioned, points to the desecration of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes, and must be understood of literal days. So also the periods of 1,290 and 1,335

days, mentioned in Dan. 12: 11, 12, probably relate to events connected with the same desecration and the oppressions and persecutions of Antiochus, and therefore can not be understood of years. Thus the theory of days in the Apocalypse signifying years gets no support from any thing in the Old Testament.

When we come to the passages in the Apocalypse itself where these synonymous designations, "a time and times and half a time," "forty and two months," and "1,260 days" occur (whatever interpretation may be given to these passages), we find them not all relating to the same events or times. Chapter 12: 6 refers to a period of persecution commencing immediately after the glorification of the Redeemer; ch. 13: 5 evidently to a later persecution. Those who interpret days here as signifying years have therefore to seek for two or more periods of 1,260 years each, commencing, and of course ending, at different points of time.

It should be remarked also that the idea of this mode of interpretation is comparatively recent, no one of the ancient interpreters having suggested it, or apparently thought of it.

What then was the significance of this period

of three years and a half employed by the apostle in different forms, and to designate different periods of calamity and trial to the Church and to the faithful witnesses of Jesus? Observe:—

1. That three and a half is the half of the sacred number *seven*, which is often used as a round number, as where God says to the Israelites, "I will chastise you *seven times* for your sins" (Lev. 26: 28); or, speaking of their enemies (Deut. 28: 7), "They shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee *seven ways*." So, "silver purified *seven times*" (Ps. 12: 6), etc. This usage prepares us to regard as probable the interpretation of *three and a half* as a definite used for an indefinite number, to designate a comparatively brief period of time. This view is confirmed by the use of the expression, "three days and a half," employed in vs. 9 and 10 to designate the time during which the bodies of the two witnesses were to lie unburied.

2. In verse 6 there is an evident allusion to the drought and famine in the days of Elijah. May not the fact that that drought continued three and a half years (Luke 4: 25; Jas. 5: 17) have had some influence in leading the apostle to use this number symbolically to represent a considerable,

and yet comparatively short, season of trial and persecution?

On the whole this seems to me the best explanation of this designation of time, and it has been accepted by several of the best recent commentators.

See also the following note.

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#### REVELATION II : 3.

“My two witnesses.”

The time during which the witnesses were to prophesy, 1,260 days, corresponds with the forty and two months (v. 2) during which the holy city was to be trodden under foot by the Gentiles. During the time of trial and persecution God would raise up witnesses for himself and for his truth, who would seal their testimony with their blood. Widely divergent have been the views of interpreters respecting these witnesses, some maintaining that they were to be two *individuals*, others that they would be two *classes* of witnesses, others a *competent number* of witnesses.

Arethas, in his commentary on this passage, expresses the opinion that they would be Enoch

and Elijah. In respect to Elijah he appeals to the prophecy in Mal. 4: 5, 6, apparently forgetting the declaration of our Saviour that that prediction was fulfilled in the coming of John the Baptist. In regard to Enoch, he says, we have no testimony from the Scriptures, except that he was translated to heaven without dying, but adds that it was a tradition generally accepted among Christians that Enoch was to be one of the two witnesses. Other ancient writers, Jewish and Christian, fancied that Moses and Elijah, or Elijah and Elisha, or Elijah and Jeremiah, would come in person as forerunners of the glorious, triumphant appearing of the Messiah. Still others have explained the two witnesses as meaning the Old and New Testaments, or the Law and the Gospel, etc. All these appear to be mere conjectures, destitute of any support from the Scriptures.

The interpretation which commends itself to my mind, as in harmony with the general symbolism of the Apocalypse, would make the *temple of God* in verse 1 to signify the spiritual temple, the great body of true believers in Jesus, and the *treading under foot* of the holy city in verse 2 the bitter persecutions to be endured by the people

of God for a period symbolically represented as "forty and two months" (the actual duration of the drought and famine in the days of Elijah, and that also of the bitterest persecutions and grossest profanations of Antiochus Epiphanes), a period long indeed and trying, but relatively very short, as compared with that of the triumph and glory of the Church in the latter day. The *two witnesses* in verse 3 would then be *an adequate number* (see John 8: 17) of witnesses for Christ, who should not count their lives dear, but should be faithful unto death. The number two I should regard as having been chosen with special reference to Moses, the law-giver of the old dispensation, and Elijah the great reformer, both of whom boldly witnessed for God and called heaven and earth to witness against the transgressors. That both are *alluded to* is evident from verse 6, "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will." These *powers* I should understand simply as a promise and pledge of the exertion of God's power for the support of his people and for the final overthrow of his and their enemies.



REVELATION 13: 18.

"The number of the beast."

Arethas gives four proper names and five appellative words or phrases, each of which, by reckoning up the numerical value of the letters, makes out the number 666. Others have been suggested by other writers, and still others on the basis of the reading 616, found in some early manuscripts. Irenæus, however, says that the best copies in his day had 666, and that that reading was attested by men who had personally known the apostle John.

Most of the suggested words or phrases have no special fitness to be regarded as the one intended by the apostle. Such are *Τειτᾶν*, *Λαμπέτις*, and *Βενέδικτος*, proper names, *παλαιβάσκανος*, *old wizard*, *ὁ νικητής*, *the conqueror*, etc.

The one which seems to me to have the best claim is *Λατῆινος*. So early a writer as Hippolytus, bishop of Portus Romæ, who flourished in 218, little more than a century from the time when the Apocalypse is generally supposed to have been written, says, "It is manifest to all that those who still rule over us are the *Λατῖνοι*, and the name when used in reference to a single

man becomes *λατρεύς*." He seems to allude to the common usage in accordance with which the spelling of an appellative noun or adjective is slightly changed when it comes to be used as a proper name.

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REVELATION 20: 4, 5.

"They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. . . . This is the first resurrection."

Much has been written on both sides of the question whether the "first resurrection" mentioned here is to be a literal or a figurative resurrection. A full discussion of this question would be quite beyond the limits of these notes. Dean Alford says: "Those who lived next to the apostles, and the whole Church for three hundred years, understood them [the words of this passage] in their plain and literal meaning; and it is a strange sight in these days to see expositors who are amongst the first in reverence of antiquity complacently casting aside the most cogent instance of consensus which primitive antiquity presents. . . . If the first resurrection is spiritual, then so is the second. . . . If the second is literal, then so is the first."

Professor Moses Stuart takes the same view. So does Dr. Craven, editor of Dr. Lange's commentary on the Apocalypse. And I must say that I have seen nothing on the other side to refute their arguments.

At the same time I find not a word in this passage or in any part of the Apocalypse to justify the anticipation of our Saviour's bodily presence with his people on earth during the thousand years. As Professor Stuart forcibly says, "The idea of *spiritual* beings, as descending from the heavenly world to this, and spending a thousand years in a *material* world whose organization is not substantially changed, can have no foundation but in the phantasy of the brain."

May divine grace prepare this writer and every reader of these notes for a share in the resurrection of the just and in the triumph and glory of their Redeemer.



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